April 25, 2002 Vol. 44, No. 16

WORKERS WORLD

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ABRIL 20, 2002

¡No más guerras! ¡No más guerras! 16

In the face of U.S.-backed Israeli war horrors

Palestinian freedom cry cannot be silenced

Bush-Powell mission aims fire at Arafat & Palestinian Authority

FIGHTING WAR MEANS FIGHTING CAPITALISM

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By Richard Becker

April 17—President Bush renewed his attacks on the Palestinian Authority and people in a speech at the Virginia Military Institute April 17. While arrogantly demanding that the besieged PA "must act—must act to stop violence," and that the Arab states must "step up to their responsibilities," Bush did not demand that Israel immediately withdraw from re-occupied Palestinian cities and towns.

On the same day, Secretary of State Colin Powell concluded his trip to the Middle East proclaiming that "some progress" had been made. Powell's 10-day trip to the region did nothing to relieve the suffering of the Palestinians or restrain the Israeli military, nor was it intended to.

PA President Yasser Arafat remains under harsh house arrest, confined to two rooms of his headquarters in Ramallah, surrounded by Israeli tanks. Many Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps remain completely occupied and curfewed.

The outcome of Powell's visit is not due to either a lack of U.S. influence or the supposed "toughness" of Sharon. It's because there was no intention on the part of the Bush administration to pressure the Israeli government.

In fact, Israel is so dependent on U.S. military and economic aid—$12 to $15 million per day—and political support that no Israeli government can ignore real directives from Washington.

As its outcome clearly shows, the Powell trip was just a charade, a diplomatic maneuver. The real purpose of Powell's visit was to undercut the mass upheaval sweeping the Middle East in support of the Palestinians, while pressuring Syria and Lebanon to prevent the opening of a second front by Lebanese guerrilla fighters along Israel's northern border.

As Powell departed, Israel announced the re-opening of the infamous Ketziot concentration camp in the southern Negev desert. Thousands of Palestinian prisoners rounded up in the Israeli offensive will be at Ketziot, as they were during the first Intifada, 1987-92. Then, Palestinians

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Mass uprising defeats CIA coup in Venezuela

By Andy McInerney



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The revolutionary process underway in Venezuela passed a decisive test over the weekend of April 13-14. Hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants across the country rose up to defeat a U.S.-backed coup attempt organized by the Venezuelan capitalist class against President Hugo Chávez.

It was a genuine victory of people's power in the first open clash of social classes in the oil-rich South American country. But the victory also lays bare the fundamental question of the Venezuelan Revolution: how to organize the popular classes—the workers, peasants, soldiers and students—to defend the revolution against further assaults by the propertied oligarchy and the weight of U.S. imperialism.

The Venezuelan Revolution, a process that opened with Chávez's election in 1998, is at a decisive crossroads. Its progress will require the international solidarity of all progressive people, especially in the United States.

Chávez and the "Bolivarian revolution"

Venezuela is a mineral-rich South American country bordering the Caribbean Sea. It is the third-largest exporter of oil to the United States—down from the largest when Chávez was elected in 1998.

But the tremendous wealth that the oil industry generates has never impacted the lives of Venezuela's working class. More than 80 percent live in poverty. One percent of the population owns 60 percent of the arable land.

The tremendous social inequities have caused tremendous explosions of popular outrage. In 1989, the ruling class unleashed a military assault on tens of thousands of people demanding lower food prices; more than 3,000 were massacred.

In 1992, junior military officers led by Lt. Col. Hugo Chávez staged a coup attempt in solidarity with huge demonstrations against International Monetary Fund-dictated austerity measures.

After spending two years in prison, Chávez toured the

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SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., April 20
Protest the REAL Axis of Evil: War, Racism, Poverty. 11 a.m. gather Dolores Park. Noon march. 1 p.m. rally Civic Center. For info (415) 821-6545 or www.InternationalANSWER.-org.

Sun., April 28
Educational forum: Palestine, the fight for freedom. Sponsored by International ANSWER. Featuring speakers from Free Palestine Alliance and International Action Center. 5 p.m. At the Women's Bldg, 3543 18th St. For info (415) 821-6545.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 19-22
National Colombia Mobilization. For info www.soaw.org/colombiamo-bilization.html or colombiamobilization.org

Sat., April 20
March on Washington Against War & Racism. Assemble 11 a.m. at the White House. For info (212) 633-6646 or www.InternationalANSWER.-org.

Mon., April 22
Protest Ariel Sharon and George Bush. 7 p.m. at the annual conference of American Israeli Public Affairs Committee. For info (212) 633-6646 or www.InternationalANSWER.-org.

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Gov't attacks immigrants, civil liberties

Muslim leader jailed on 'secret evidence'



Salma Al-Rashaid, speaking at a Jan. 19 rally in support of her husband, Rabih Haddad.

PHOTO: CHRIS GEOVANIS, CHICAGO INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

By Beth Semmer
Chicago

Of all the post-Sept. 11 attacks on civil liberties, the government's vendetta against Rabih Haddad's Global Relief Foundation (GRF) may be the broadest and most dangerous.

If U.S. courts allow the Bush administration to use "secret evidence" to prosecute the GRF—the country's second-largest Muslim charity—then the door will open to attack community, religious and political organizations of all descriptions, based merely on government claims. The basic rights of citizens and non-citizens to associate and organize will be dramatically curtailed.

Rabih Haddad's case echoes those of many other immigrants rounded up after 9/11. Like thousands of others, Haddad has been illegally imprisoned and held for months without criminal charges, bail, or any evidence to justify his incarceration.

Haddad, a Lebanese immigrant and Muslim community leader from Ann Arbor, Mich., is a co-founder of GRF. The U.S. government raided the Islamic charity's Chicago headquarters last December, claiming the group supports "terrorism." GRF's assets were frozen and Haddad was arrested at his home, ostensibly for overstaying a tourist visa.

Minor visa violations are the only basis for most of the racist round-ups.

Press, public banned from hearings

The closer one looks at the government's actions in Rabih Haddad's case, the more sinister they appear.

Government prosecutors have banned the public, the media and even Haddad's family from attending his court hearings. This violation of the right to an open trial prompted editorial protests from the Washington Post and other newspapers. U.S. Rep. John Conyers, the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit Metro News and the American Civil Liberties Union have filed lawsuits demanding access.

The government also began deportation proceedings against Haddad's partner, Salma Al-Rashaid, and three of their four children after she spoke out about his conditions at a rally in front of Chicago's Metropolitan Correction Center.

According to U.S. Attorney for Northern Illinois Patrick Fitzgerald, Haddad and the GRF aren't even considered the targets of a criminal investigation. Yet GRF remains shut down and its assets frozen.

In January, Haddad was moved from a Detroit county jail to Chicago's Metropolitan Correction Center. He was held in maximum-security, "super-solitary" conditions, allowed only one 15-minute phone call and four hours of non-contact visits per month. Thanks to several strong protests in Illinois and Michigan and Rep. Conyers' intervention, Haddad was released from solitary. His visiting and phone privileges have quadrupled.

Andy Thayer of the Chicago Coalition Against War & Racism and the Chicago Anti-Bashing Network told Workers World: "The fact remains that Haddad has been legally kidnapped by Attorney General John Ashcroft and Company for over 100 days. This kidnapping is not just a Republican Party project. For all the focus on Ashcroft's bullying of immigrant communities, much of the legal machinery depriving Haddad and hundreds of others from the Bill of Rights' protections originated with Bill Clinton's Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996."

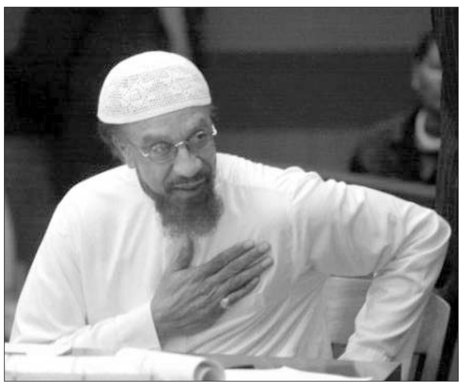
Thayer raised the case of Mazen Al-Najjar, a Palestinian immigrant who was victimized by the 1996 law. Al-Najjar was detained in 1997 and incarcerated for three years based on government claims of "secret evidence" that he had raised funds for a terrorist organization. In a two-week trial the government's lead witness, an immigration agent, admitted there was no evidence against Al-Najjar. He was released in 2000, only to be detained again in November 2001 based on the same nonexistent secret evidence. Al Najjar remains in prison today.

Thayer will speak about Haddad's case at the April 20 March Against War and Racism in Washington.

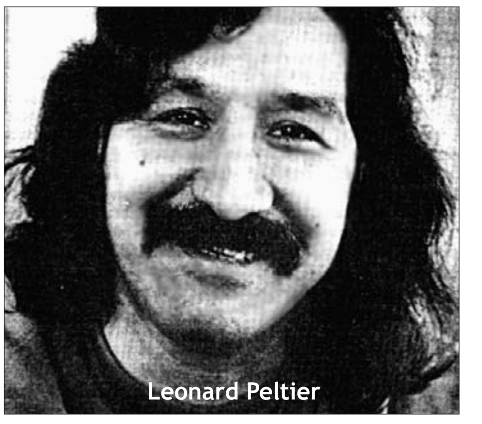
Haves lock up have-nots

Prisons unmask U.S. racism

By Monica Moorehead



Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin



Leonard Peltier



Mumia Abu-Jamal

In just a few words, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the world-renowned death-row political prisoner, describes the impact of U.S. prisons on human beings better than whole volumes of books. In "Live from Death Row" Abu-Jamal wrote:

"A dark, repressive trend in the business field known as 'corrections' is sweeping the United States, and it bodes ill both for the captives and for the communities from which they were captured. America is revealing a visage stark with harshness. Nowhere is that face more contorted than in the dark netherworld of prison, where humans are transformed into nonpersons, numbered beings cribbed into boxes of unlife, where the very soul is under destructive onslaught."

The vast majority of people in the United States still hold the misguided view that incarceration is a means to bring about social rehabilitation. In a few individual cases, that may be true. But these are exceptions to the general rule.

Racist, anti-poor institutions

Prisons are social institutions that arise within a class society that is divided into rich and poor, haves and have-nots, colonized and colonizers.

When the vast majority are the have-nots, the wealthy depend on the prisons to help establish and maintain law and social order. This means the rich are allowed to get richer at the expense of the poor getting poorer. An added dimension of incarceration is the privatization of prisons, which has generated billions of dollars in profits for Wall Street firms.

There are close to 2.1 million people incarcerated in the U.S. and no end in sight to this tragic new form of human slavery. The U.S. has 25 percent of the world's incarcerated population. At least a quarter of them did not even commit a violent act. They are either awaiting sentencing or doing time for drug offenses.

Sentencing practices for drug offenses help to expose the systematically racist nature of U.S. prisons. According to a 1999 Sentencing Project report, the proportion of African American drug arrests rose from 25 percent in 1980 to 37 percent in 1995. African Americans make up only 13 percent of U.S. drug users, but account for 37 percent of those arrested on drug offenses, 55 percent of those convicted, and 74 percent of those sent to prison.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, there are close to 3,500 Black male inmates for every 100,000 Black males in the total population, compared to 417 white male prisoners for every 100,000 white males. On any day, 30 percent of Black men aged 20-29 are in jail or prison or on probation or parole. These sentencing practices amount to the racist criminalization of an entire people.

And then there's the death penalty.

Millionaires need not apply

Studies have repeatedly shown that the death penalty is not a deterrent to violent crime. But the U.S. criminal-justice system still chooses to project the myth of deterrence.

The Death Penalty Information Center reports that of the nearly 3,800 people who languish on death row, 43 percent are Black. This means the Black proportion of the death row population is triple the Black proportion of the general population.

In 2000, 40 percent of the 85 people executed were African American. If this isn't a racist, genocidal policy, then what is?

To quote Abu-Jamal, "Millionaires need not apply for death row."

Whenever the death penalty is carried out against any person of color or poor person, it strengthens the repressive machine of the capitalist state. Any execution helps to give credibility to a bankrupt, barbaric political and economic system that puts profits before meeting the needs of the people.

Out of the depths of prison despair many revolutionaries have arisen, from George Jackson to Malcolm X. Their heirs include Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, the Puerto Rican prisoners of war, Sundiata Acoli, the MOVE 9, the Angola 3, the Cuban 5, Rabih Haddad, Mutulu Shakur and countless others. Their only "crime" was to openly oppose racism, capitalist oppression and exploitation.

These revolutionaries understand that the prisons are the crime, not the poor and oppressed.

To be against the war means to link the struggle against imperialist wars abroad with the struggle against repression at home—including the prisons. The enemy is one in the same.

Bush's war at home

The 'jobless' recovery

By Greg Butterfield

International events dominate the headlines. But while the Bush administration pushes "endless war" against poor people overseas, the rich and powerful are also waging war against poor and working people here at home.

For example, on April 8, jeans maker Levi Strauss said it would close its flagship factory in San Francisco, along with five other plants in the United States, cutting 3,300 jobs.

Local 101 of the Food and Commercial Workers union represents the 100 workers at the San Francisco plant–mostly women and immigrants from Asia and Latin America. Local 101 joined the Chinese Progressive Association and other groups for an April 11 protest at the factory. They called on Levi's Chief Executive Officer Philip Marineau to resign.

When those Levi Strauss workers hit the bricks, they'll face bleak prospects. Corporate America has a new buzzword, you see: the jobless recovery.

What does it mean? Companies may start producing more. Profits may improve. The CEOs' fingers are crossed that the much-ballyhooed recovery is more than a statistical blip.

But beware. New jobs may remain scarce. So say economic experts working for Wall Street banks and think tanks.

So far there's no sign of recovery for U.S. workers. In March the official unemployment rate rose from 5.5 to 5.7 percent. That figure doesn't include the millions who aren't counted because they've given up looking for work, or those who are underemployed.

Factories cut another 38,000 jobs in March. The construction industry lost 37,000.

African Americans were hardest hit. The unemployment rate for Black workers jumped a full percentage point to 10.7 percent.

At the end of the month the number of people collecting unemployment insurance benefits was 3.8 million–the most in 19 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Mass layoffs continue, with no end in sight. During the first week of April, WorldCom announced it was cutting 3,700 jobs; Lucent Technologies, 5,000; and so on.

Challenger, Gray and Christmas, an employment research firm, reported that the retail industry cut 51,078 jobs in the first three months of 2002. That's nearly half of last year's total—96,741—with only one-quarter of this year over. (Reuters, April 8)

It's getting harder for workers who've been laid off to find new jobs. In March the number of long-term unemployed workers jumped a quarter-million, to 1.3 million. According to the Challenger report, it takes twice as long on average to find a job as it did in 2001.

It's not just the unemployed who are suffering. Those who managed to hold onto their jobs are barely running in place. A study conducted by consulting firm Towers Perrin found that most companies lowered pay increases in 2001.

This year, nearly 60 percent of employers plan to reduce raises still further, to under 3.5 percent. (USA Today, April 4)

Yet in 2001, as stocks were plunging and bankruptcies multiplied, compensation for top corporate executives rose by 24 percent, to a median of $10.2 million, according to a report commissioned by USA Today. The Investor Responsibility Research Center reviewed 267 companies with revenues over $1 billion.

Companies expanding production aren't hiring much. The bosses want to do more with less, so they're adding overtime and piling new responsibilities on their current employees instead of hiring new ones. See, it's all part of the jobless recovery.

The Levi's workers are on the right track. Protests are a must.

But the labor movement and the whole working class also need daring new tactics that go further. Workers can challenge the bosses' right to kill jobs with sit-down strikes, plant and store takeovers, and by asserting their ownership of bankrupt firms. The labor movement needs politically aware workers, especially young workers who aren't afraid to step on the bosses' toes, to take the lead.

LOS ANGELES

School bus drivers strike for better pay

By Adrian Garcia
Los Angeles

What more precious cargo can there be than children? You'd think the drivers of this precious cargo would be among the best-paid workers. But you'd be wrong.

On April 2, some 800 school bus drivers went on strike against the Los Angeles Unified School District's biggest transportation contractor, Laidlaw Educational Services. The striking drivers, members of Teamsters Local 572, are demanding parity with drivers employed directly by the district.

The hourly wages of district-employed drivers range from $19-$25 and are supplemented with full health and welfare benefits and solid pensions.

Laidlaw drivers, on the other hand, earn between $8.50 and $12.00 an hour. They pay substantial amounts for health care and other benefits, with the employer's contribution reaching 90 percent only after 10 years of service.

The strike affects about 20,000 children in Los Angeles. Most are inner-city kids who are bused to schools outside their neighborhoods because of severe overcrowding.

"Laidlaw drivers work the same hours on the same buses, yet are relegated to working poverty," said Local 572 Business Rep. Lonnie Holmes. "They deserve better. The children of Los Angeles deserve better."

Considering that LAUSD recently cut $51 million in school funding and announced that teachers should not expect a raise until 2008, it's not surprising that the district sided with Laidlaw management against the drivers. Superintendent Ray Romer commented in an April 11 Los Angeles Times interview that he believes Laidlaw pays its workers a living wage and the strikers should settle immediately.

Union members say the district has stepped up pressure on contractors to offer lower bids for services. Lower bid contracts have become the norm in every facet of the school district's dealings. This business-like approach to school management, with a focus on cutting costs at the expense of quality and safety, will have serious repercussions for workers and schoolchildren alike.

Despite Laidlaw's and LAUSD's attempts to demoralize the drivers, solidarity is strengthening their fight. With the aid of fellow Teamsters, Local 572 reported that it reached an agreement with the management at Laidlaw rival Atlantic Express. Under the terms of the agreement, Teamster drivers at Atlantic Express will no longer be pressured to accept work on Laidlaw bus routes during the strike.

"An injury to one is an injury to all," stated Local 572 Trustee Rick Middleton. "Laidlaw Teamsters appreciate the support of their fellow union members at Atlantic Express and with their support we will end this strike and secure a fair contract."

The demands being made by the striking drivers are just and workers everywhere should support their struggle for a living wage. This attack against workers through exploitative and divisive tactics must be confronted and repelled, for an attack on one worker is an attack on all workers.

CEO greed endemic to capitalism

Robber barons clash at

By Milt Neidenberg

How much is too much?

A debate is smoldering between powerful investors and shareholders and the chief executive officers that manage the giant monopoly corporations. Greed is the driving force. Obscene financial reward is the goal. Control of the money and ownership is the prize.

Huge fortunes are on the line. But these opposing cliques aren't as easily recognized as the Rockefellers, Morgans and DuPonts of yesteryear.

In an unprecedented, two-page account entitled "Executive Pay," the April 7 New York Times documented the huge salaries of 200 of the most powerful corporate and banking CEOs during fiscal 2001. The report illuminates their bloated salaries, bonuses, stock options, long-term incentives and other handouts.

The compensation of these 200 chief executives and their underlings is a mind-blowing disclosure. But it only confirms the existence of a corporate and banking culture that ruthlessly rips off assets and leaves employees at the mercy of layoffs, downsizing, and bankruptcies.

Unlike the workers, these officials are paid astronomical amounts regardless of performance. Some CEOs rip off their companies for hundreds of millions of dollars. The majority takes millions, and not a single one takes less than $1 million. Berkshire Hathaway Chair Warren E. Buffet received $36 billion—that's right, billion—in compensation during fiscal 2001, even with no stock options.

Shareholders vs. CEOs

It's clear that the Times report was calculated to expose the executives who run the companies. The Times, by its agitation for reform, has taken the side of the big shareholders and investors. Many powerful shareholders and investors suffered heavily during the stock market downturn. Of course, millions of smaller investors were entirely wiped out.

The controversy is over how stock options are distributed to CEOs and whether the major shareholders and investors are the victims of accounting practices that cover up the real earnings of the giant corporate/banking entities.

This is not an arcane issue. AOL Time Warner CEO Gerald M. Levin, who plans to leave in May, has more than $146 million in stock options in his account. Recent panic-selling triggered a 10-percent plunge of the stock, marking a post-merger low. Shareholders took a beating in earnings per share. But later, when the stock rises again, Levin will make a killing.

Similarly, Jeffrey R. Immelt, who recently became General Electric's CEO, has more than $20 million in stock options in his account during his first year. GE, the world's biggest company by market value, reported a decline in profits that caused its stock to drop sharply. Now GE plans to lay off 7,000 workers.

The stock market slumped more than 200 points on April 12, while both AOL Time Warner and GE stocks were sliding. Wealthy shareholders are boiling mad as CEOs continue to reap handsome rewards at their expense.

As Congress prepares to rewrite accounting rules, a war of words has opened up between President Bush and Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan, a powerful figure in the world of high finance. The issue appears to be over complex accounting practices. But it is far more than that.

What's at stake is corporate governance of critical decisions over the distribution of billions of dollars siphoned off from the revenue of the mega-banks and corporations.

Greenspan wants legislation that would force companies to record stock options as expenses like other forms of compensation, such as wages and benefits. This would provide shareholders and investors with more transparency, giving them more accurate information on profits earned by corporations and banks. Greenspan hopes to eliminate any shocks to the financial markets that are seesawing dramatically week-to-week.

Bush, acting on behalf of the wealthy CEOs—remember, that's how he runs the government—wants options to appear on a company's financial statement as income, not as an expense. Corporate and banking tycoons are then able to add their stock options, like any other stock transfer, to inflate the corporate books. This artificially adds billions more to corporate income. Those earnings, however, get severely diluted when the CEOs cash in their exorbitant stock options.

Youth of color, lesbian, gay, bi, trans

Colby College students confront trustees



PHOTO: AMANDA ASHMAN
Left to right, freshman Erin Hill and coalition organizer Javanese Hailey, a junior, reading aloud list of student demands presented to trustees on April 13.

By Leslie Feinberg

When the Colby College Board of Trustees met on campus on April 13, the demands of students of color and lesbian, gay, bi and trans students were in their faces all day long. Colby is a private liberal arts college in Waterville, Maine, with a student body of 1,700.

The trustees planned to convene to confer about the school president's "strategic plan" for Colby. But oppressed students were not about to allow their demands to be rendered invisible in that plan. So they formed a powerful coalition, student leader Javenese Hailey told Workers World.

"As a woman and a visible person of color, I have experienced racism and discrimination on all levels at Colby," she said. She quoted civil-rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer, "I was sick and tired of being sick and tired."

Hailey noted, "Working through college committees and voicing concerns with administrators and faculty proved futile." So she decided to organize civil disobedience to "rock Colby's bureaucratic boat, raise the consciousness of our community about the issues that marginalized groups on this campus face and demand institutional changes."

Originally, Hailey recalled, "The idea was to focus solely on institutional racism. However, the more I began to examine the dynamics of oppression, I began to realize that there was room for coalition building with queer students at Colby, and that because oppressions interlock, that coalition was necessary. The issues that we addressed were racism and heterosexism at Colby."

She stressed, "We wanted Colby to be held accountable for its reluctance to address the needs of these two groups in the past and present. Our coalition went as far back as 32 years to bring to light previous demands that had been 'conveniently neglected' by this institution. Our list of demands included multicultural housing, a Queer Studies department, more diverse curricula in various departments and increased enrollment of Native American students."

'They got the message!'

White, queer-identified student activist Amanda Ashman described the protest events to Workers World. Students draped the campus with painted bed sheet banners urging, "Students of color and queer students unite!" Since it was Pride week on campus, they also hung "this amazing rainbow quilt that a student had made. But by morning it got cut down," she said.

"In the morning we set up our table in the student center, which is a central thoroughfare. We had a big banner for students to sign." It read "Solidarity through diversity: Take a stand against institutionalized racism and heterosexism." Ashman noted that only two students balked at adding their names while she was at the table.

Students wore white scarves across their mouths or pinned to their clothing, she explained, "as a symbolic gesture of how students of color and queer students are silenced on this campus. And we made and wore T-shirts with our demands on them."

At 10 a.m. students took over all radio programming at WNHB—the campus station—for four hours, broadcasting audiotapes of students describing the racism, anti-lesbian, gay, bi and trans bigotry and discrimination they have encountered, as well as political music like Queen Latifah's "Unity."

Other youths set up a steady stream of meetings with the dean of students' office to begin transfer procedures—mostly symbolic—to drive home student anger at the campus political climate.

During the afternoon, "We all moved over to Robert's Union, which is where the board was meeting," Ashman continued. There, students read their own drafted "strategic plan" that included their demands. And, "we read some of the student experiences, read some poetry, sang, and made some noise chanting, 'The people united will never be defeated' and singing 'Lift every voice and sing,' " historically viewed as the African American national anthem.

When the trustees held a reception, students took advantage of the huge glass doors of the campus restaurant. They massed in front of the glass with fluorescent poster boards inked with their militant messages. Ashman noted, "They had to go through us to get in. You could definitely tell they didn't know what to do and they couldn't ignore us. Some tried to find another way in."

When the trustees tried to move to another location for dinner they had to wend their way through another tight circle of student protesters.

By the end of the day, Ashman said, the trustees "definitely got our message. It was a wake-up call."

In assessing the Colby struggle, Javenese Hailey concluded: "I cannot emphasize enough how important the coalition between the students of color and queer students was. I strongly believe that the liberation of all people depends on our capacity to liberate every oppressed group of people. And though our oppressions are different, our experiences of belonging to oppressed groups can hold us together.

"It was hard work, as is the case with any movement against the status quo, but it was well worth it. I would do it over again in a heartbeat.

"One of the most important things I learned was that making coalitions is not comfortable; in general, we may not fully understand the experiences of those belonging to different oppressed groups—that's what makes it uncomfortable. But if we can move beyond that awkwardness to support each other, anything is possible."

workers' expense

Stock options, combined with inside information, provide CEOs with valuable choices about when to cash in. If a stock is down, the CEO can hold onto it and wait for it to rise. If a company's stock has peaked and bankruptcy is in the wind, the CEO can cash out before the stock's value crashes to earth.

This allowed appointees like Secretary of the Army Thomas White, who ran Enron Energy Services—a fraudulent Enron front—to dump more than $12 million in stock options, pocketing a significant profit for himself shortly before Enron went bankrupt. White has already admitted that he had 73 contacts with current or former Enron executives since he joined the Bush administration.

As secretary of the Army, White now applies his thieving, fraudulent tactics to dishing out multi-billion-dollar contracts to the military-industrial corporations.

The proposed accounting changes could expose the Bush administration's many connections to law-breaking Enron executives and their bankers.

It's a no-win situation for both warring factions in this period of slow economic growth: a declining rate of profit; inflation; overproduction; a mountain of debt in the private and public sectors; and most important, a recent decrease in the consumer confidence index that will further exacerbate the capitalist crisis.

It's like an argument over how to line up deck chairs on the Titanic. There are more Enrons, Global Crossings, Tycos, Qwests, Kmarts and Bethlehem Steels on the horizon. As the waves of bankruptcies grow, they will in time deepen the capitalist crisis in the U.S.

The fallout has been brutal on workers, their families and loved ones. Millions have been laid off, health benefits lost, and retirement plans like 401(k)s wiped out because companies invested the workers' funds in their own self-serving interests.

Workers suffer

Even now, Congress plans to further weaken legal protection for workers' pensions while Democrats and Republicans hypocritically lament the loss of 401(k)s.

The cruelest hoax of all was played on workers at Arthur Andersen, the giant accounting corporation whose executives cooked Enron's books, allowing management to cover up its fraudulent trading operations.

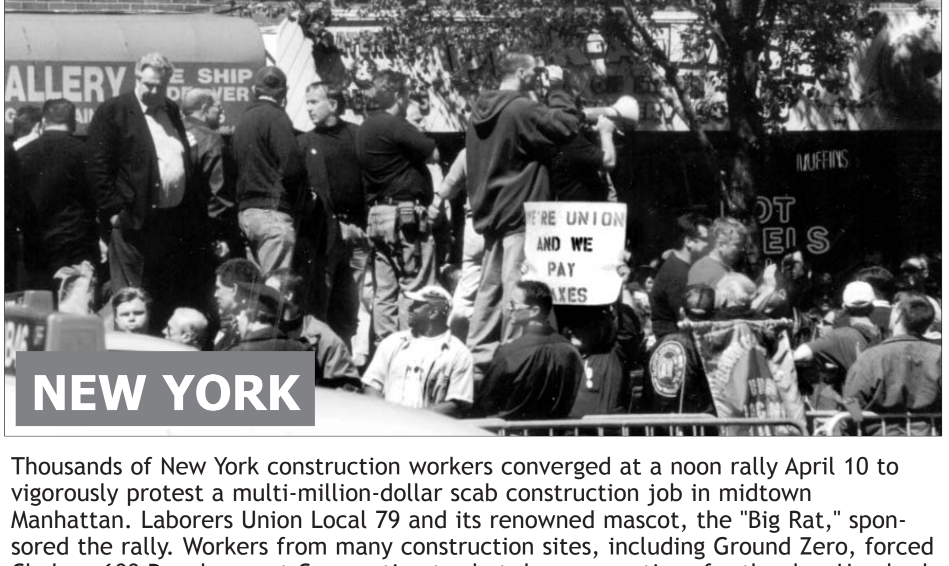
When the Justice Department initiated criminal obstruction-of-justice charges for shredding documents related to their audit of Enron, Andersen bosses ordered thousands of workers to march with "I am Andersen" signs to protest the criminal charges. Now these very employees—between 5,000 and 8,000 of them—are being laid off.

Instead, picture millions of workers who are receiving the same treatment taking Andersen's idea, but turning it against the bosses. They carry signs into the streets that read, "We are GE, we are AOL Time-Warner, we are Bethlehem Steel" as a symbol of their realization that they are the true owners of these giant corporations.

Because they are. Workers are indispensable to production. They alone add something of real value in the process of creating goods and services—their labor power. The dollar value of their deferred accumulated benefits, such as pensions and wages, also gives them the legal right of ownership. How and when those rights will be implemented remains to be seen.

Now is an ideal time for labor to intervene and challenge the robber barons, while they are at each other's throats.

Construction workers protest scabs



Thousands of New York construction workers converged at a noon rally April 10 to vigorously protest a multi-million-dollar scab construction job in midtown Manhattan. Laborers Union Local 79 and its renowned mascot, the "Big Rat," sponsored the rally. Workers from many construction sites, including Ground Zero, forced Chelsea 600 Development Corporation to shut down operations for the day. Hundreds of cops blocked off streets surrounding the site. They feared a repeat of a 1999 protest, when thousands of construction workers broke through police barricades, fought the cops and marched right into a scab site.

—Story and photo by Milt Neidenberg

Endless war = endless profits

What kind of 'peace' does the U.S. want?

By Sara Flounders

What kind of "peace" do President George W. Bush and the rest of the U.S. establishment want to see in Palestine and throughout the Middle East?

A brief look at the role of the U.S. in the region answers that question.

Every U.S. administration, Republican or Democrat, has given complete military, economic and diplomatic support to Israel since its establishment in 1948. Israel acts as a secure base in a region where 300 million Arab people are struggling to throw off colonial domination.

During the eight years that the Clinton administration was brokering the "Oslo Accords" that were supposedly to lead to a Palestinian homeland, it was pumping billions of dollars of military aid into Israel. During those "peace talks," the number of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza more than doubled. The number of settlers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank rose to more than 400,000.

An extensive system of Israeli-only bypass roads carved the very land that was supposed to become the new Palestinian state into smaller and smaller cantons cut off from each other. This was not done in secret, or without Washington's backing.

It's also no secret the United States has continued to heavily arm Israel during the last 18 months of the Palestinian Intifada, or Uprising. An estimated 1,300 Palestinians have been gunned down by Israeli fire and more than 30,000 wounded.

The purpose of Secretary of State Colin Powell's current Middle East trip is to try to paper over the brutality of the Israeli occupation with a temporary cease-fire so that the United States can proceed with all-out war against Iraq. The Pentagon is the most powerful military machine in world history, but U.S. leaders fear unleashing its terror because of aroused mass anger throughout the Arab world.

fighting war means fighting capitalism

When Bush demands that the Palestinians renounce violence in the face of an Israeli onslaught, he's really saying: End the resistance and submit to occupation.

U.S. aid to Israel—the largest recipient—now exceeds $12-$15 million dollars a day, every day of the year. The money goes to Boeing, Lockheed, General Dynamics and other U.S. corporations. It is delivered to Israel as tanks, jet aircraft, helicopter gunships and ammunition.

This is a source of endless profit for the powerful, tiny ruling class in the United States.

Instability in the region means continuing U.S. domination and an ongoing stream of lucrative military contracts.

So the owners of the U.S. military-industrial complex don't want peace in Palestine or anywhere in the world. War is too profitable.

The Bush administration is determined to open a new devastating war against Iraq, in spite of the opposition of every country in the region. U.S. corporations are hungry to control the vast Iraqi oil reserves, estimated at more than 100 billion barrels. In the meantime they are determined to keep Iraqi oil off the markets, continue starvation economic sanctions and control the revenue from the small amount of oil Iraq is permitted to pump.

Addicted to war profits

More than $50 billion a year is reportedly spent on Pentagon bases in the Persian Gulf region to maintain U.S. corporate control of the largest source of oil wealth in the world. The Pentagon military bases throughout the Persian Gulf keep the whole region in a prison lockdown.

This vast military presence benefits the biggest U.S. corporations in several ways. The system of bases, aircraft carriers and thousands of troops in the Persian Gulf gives the United States a dominant position, even against other competing imperialist powers, in the control of two-thirds of the world's known oil reserves.

These bases help prop up the tiny, corrupt monarchies in the oil-rich states. The royal families in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates hand over the majority of oil revenue to purchase weapons from U.S. military corporations. The richest oil monarchies, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have ended up as debtor nations. The average person in Saudi Arabia, where illiteracy is still 60 percent, doesn't benefit from the oil wealth.

In addition, the enormous U.S. military expenditure amounts to a direct subsidy of guaranteed super-profits to the biggest U.S. oil and military corporations. It is paid for with the tax dollars of working people.

Today more than half the federal budget is spent on past, present and future wars. This was true even before George W. Bush said in his State of the Union speech asking for a $43 billion Pentagon increase, "The budget I have submitted is the largest single increase in military spending in a generation."

How will this war budget be paid?

Hundreds of desperately needed programs will be slashed. For example, the $225 million dollars slated for youth job training grants to 36 cities has been cut to a mere $45 million.

Just one Osprey aircraft costs $84 million. The Pentagon has 50 on order.

The cost of three of these aircraft could pay for the youth job training program. So why isn't this far more rational choice made by Congress, the White House and U.S. policy makers? Don't the majority of people in this country want and need job training, education, universal health care and decent housing?

Yes. But social programs don't provide as high a rate of profit as military contracts. In a profit-driven capitalist economy, this propels capital investment in the direction of larger and larger military contracts. New expenditures can only be justified by new military threats and provocations.

That's why the U.S. capitalist economy is addicted to war.

To pay for this addiction, Social Security retirement funds are being looted to insure the profits of the giant oil and military corporations.

Capitalism is a system of ruthless competition among giant monopolies that need and feed on war. The very survival of these corporations is entirely dependent on their control of markets and an endless stream of billions of dollars in military contracts.

The U.S. portrays its military juggernaut as all-powerful and invincible. But the small nation of Palestinian people who have courageously stood up to the military might of the U.S.-backed occupation have ignited an explosive global movement in solidarity that is challenging the U.S. military machine and its drive for war.

Now it's important within the United States to widen solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle. And building broad opposition to the Pentagon's "endless wars" is an indispensable part of fighting the whole rotten capitalist system.

Know your enemy

What is imperialism?

By Greg Butterfield

The word imperialism is used a lot by people in the progressive and revolutionary movement. What does it mean?

Some people think imperialism is just a cuss word radicals use to put down rotten government policies. But it's more than that.

Imperialism is rooted in a particular economic system, capitalism, and benefits a particular class, which Marxists call the bourgeoisie or ruling class. The bourgeoisie is the super-wealthy class of corporate owners, bankers and big landlords.

Progressives know that the United States acts in an imperialist way. The U.S. government, which represents the ruling class, imposes its will on other countries by economic, political and military means.

But imperialism is not a government policy put forth by one administration or political party. It's the economic system underlying all U.S. government policies, liberal or conservative, Democratic or Republican.

Most people are taught that imperialism simply means a big country bullying a small country. Sometimes that's true, but it's not a complete definition. In the wrong hands, this common-sense definition can be dangerously misleading.

The U.S. government often accuses other governments of "imperialist" behavior. Washington takes advantage of the common, but incomplete, idea of bigger country vs. smaller country to turn public opinion against socialist and progressive nationalist countries trying to maintain their independence.

For example, when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, George Bush the First called the Iraqi government imperialist. Bush neglected to mention that Iraq was responding to provocations from the U.S.-controlled Kuwaiti monarchy, which was stealing Iraqi oil.

He didn't explain how Kuwait had been arbitrarily carved off from Iraq under British colonial rule, or how the Iraqi people made a revolution in 1958 to be independent of U.S./British domination.

Imperialism = monopoly capitalism

Not every capitalist country is imperialist. In fact, most of the world's people live in poor, underdeveloped capitalist countries like Iraq that are exploited by the imperialist powers of the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia and Japan.

Capitalism developed first and reached its most advanced stage in those countries. Imperialism exists by keeping the rest of the world enslaved and dependent on its institutions, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

V.I. Lenin, the Russian revolutionary leader of the early 20th century, gave the most complete, scientific definition of imperialism in his 1916 booklet, "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism."

He wrote: "If it were necessary to give the briefest definition of imperialism, we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism."

Using economic statistics and historical facts, Lenin showed how capitalism's early, free-market phase led to the creation of giant industrial and banking monopolies.

Cutthroat competition constantly bankrupted businesses. More successful rivals gobbled these businesses up, until two, three, four, or even a single monopoly dominated whole industries.

This process of concentration into monopolies continues today on a much bigger scale. Now giant monopolies absorb other giant monopolies. Some recent examples are AOL Time Warner, Walt Disney/ABC, ExxonMobil, DaimlerChrysler and JP Morgan Chase.

Banks dominate

As industrial monopolies grew, so did their hunger for profits. They fought monopolies from the other imperialist powers for the right to dominate poorer countries.

Continued on page 8

The hidden fist behind U.S. monopolies

To defend and excuse the brutal U.S. bombing of Yugoslavia, Thomas Friedman, the strongest apologist for capitalist globalization, wrote these oft-quoted words exposing the ties between U.S. big business and the Pentagon for his March 28, 1999, New York Times column:

The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

'War on Terror': Behind the U.S. Big Lie

By Fred Goldstein

The Bush Administration is pressing forward with a worldwide U.S. military offensive under the pretext of fighting "the war against terrorism." In fact, this is a cover for a campaign to expand the Pentagon's military reach and operations. And in turn, the purpose of expanding the Pentagon's military machine is to secure the spread of capitalism in its most oppressive form, imperialism.

The corporate ruling class in the United States, its political establishment and its wholly owned media have brought the art of telling the Big Lie to new heights in order to conceal their aims.

Take the war against Afghanistan, launched just weeks after Sept. 11. It was labeled a "war against terrorism." But it was actually a brutal war of terrorism. All the military technology in the U.S. arsenal rained down upon a basically defenseless country, ravaged by two decades of war, without a standing army or an air force. This under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

Thousands of civilians were killed and wounded. Villages were destroyed as hundreds of thousands were made homeless or refugees. Hundreds of cruise missiles, thousands of "smart bombs," 15,000-pound fuel-filled incendiary bombs called Daisy Cutters, anti-personnel bombs, each with thousands of knife-like fragments, gunships firing thousands of rounds per minute, were launched from land and sea. It was a massive weapon testing program and a display of killing ability.

The Afghanistan campaign was truly a terror campaign—not only against the people of Afghanistan so that Washington could put its own government in power, but against the people of the world. Washington meant it to be a demonstration of awesome military power calculated to terrorize friend and foe alike. It was meant to send a message that Washington is on the march and no one should dare resist.

Watch what they do, not what they say

When the smoke cleared after the main U.S. operations in Afghanistan, the Pentagon had done what it really set out to do strategically.

"Since Sept. 11," reported the Jan. 6 Los Angeles Times, "the United States has set up military bases housing sixty thousand troops in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, along with Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, and Bulgaria."

And what is the purpose of all this deployment? The Caspian Sea region has vast oil reserves, the second largest in the world. The U.S. government is now a power in the region. It can secure the position of the U.S. oil companies that covet the area's resources.

This is where the Big Lie and class deception come in. If the Bush administration had said to the people of the United States, "We are going to war in Afghanistan to terrorize the world and grab the oil of the Caspian for the giant oil monopolies like Exxon, Chevron, Unocal, etc. so they can take over this wealth that rightly belongs to the people of the region and reap fabulous profits in the future from selling it"—there would have been very few takers.

The same argument holds true for the U.S.-backed offensive by Ariel Sharon against the Palestinian national liberation movement. George W. Bush and the capitalist class would never dare tell the class truth about their policy of aggression in Palestine.

Two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves are in the region. There are more than 265 billion barrels in Saudi Arabia alone, more than 100 million barrels each in Iran and Iraq, more than 90 billion in Kuwait and so on. (World Energy Council 1998 report)

For decades, hundreds of billions of barrels have been taken out of the region and sold by the oil monopolies at huge profits. They look at those hundreds of billions of barrels still under the ground as their future profits.

And they would do anything—including genocide against the Palestinians and war against the whole region—to keep them.

Because of this corporate plunder, carried out with the collaboration of reactionary governments in the area, 300 million Arab people live largely in poverty. They have suffered colonialism and oppression for hundreds of years.

That is where Israel, imperialism and the Big Lie come in. The Bush administration, and every administration before since 1948, have posed as defenders of the Jewish people's right to a state, defenders of democracy in the Middle East, and so on.

If Bush were to tell the class truth he would have to say that because of the oppression of the Arab people by capitalism and imperialism, no Arab regime can be trusted to secure the interests of U.S. big business and particularly the oil companies. We all know that if we don't stop them, he would say, the Arab people will rebel and demand to take back their land and their resources. The only reliable ally we have is the Zionist state that we founded and which is tied completely to us.

That is why we, the U.S., have given the Israeli state $100 billion in military support since 1967. That is why we consider it a high crime if the Palestinian people, the main threat to the Israeli state, get one shipload of small arms with which to resist our F-16s, our helicopters warships, and all the other weapons that we have given to make the Israeli Army among the top five in the world.

It is to secure the super-profits pouring into the treasuries of the transnationals that we fold our arms while Ariel Sharon commits horrendous war crimes against an occupied people, while we demand that President Yassir Arafat basically denounce the Palestinian resistance. This is what Bush would say if he told the truth.

fighting war means fighting capitalism

The same Big Lie applies to Bush's planned war against Iraq. Washington says it is worried about "weapons of mass destruction." The only nuclear power in the Middle East is Israel. Anyway, the Pentagon has enough weapons of mass destruction to destroy the world several times over. And the United States is the only power to have ever used nuclear weapons in war. Just a month ago the Bush administration announced an implied threat to use nuclear weapons.

The war against Iraq, as well as the threats to Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are basically about stopping any regime that will challenge the right of U.S. corporations and their military machine to dominate the world.

Washington's escalating war in Latin America, against the Colombian resistance to the death-squad government of the oligarchy—backed by U.S. Blackhawk helicopters, communications equipment, intelligence and Special Forces—is designed to stop a popular revolution from overthrowing Colombian capitalism and ousting imperialism.

This is the same motive for U.S. backing of the failed coup in Venezuela against the popular nationalist regime of Hugo Chavez.

Every lie about "civilization vs. terrorism" or "democracy against terrorism" is meant to conceal the defense of the profit makers.

Capitalism: how it really works

Many commentators will of course admit that the United States is defending capitalism. But it is always put in a very benign way. Merely stating things this way conceals the essence of the social reality underlying all forms of capitalism.

The fact is that capitalism and all profit and capitalist wealth rests upon stolen labor and stolen resources.

The marauding around the globe in search of cheap labor, whether by Nike or General Motors or McDonald's, is done because every penny that is not paid to the workers becomes another penny of profit for the corporate bosses.

There is no profit without unpaid labor. This is as true whether applied to the auto workers in Detroit, the orange grove workers in Brazil, the copper workers in Zambia, the workers who make baseballs in Haiti, or the millions of undocumented immigrants who labor in the sweatshops of the United States.

The struggle for cheap labor is the other side of the insatiable drive for profit. This is what's behind runaway shops in the United States, union busting, cuts in health care and safety, refusal to provide childcare. In fact, every form of suffering of the broad working class and the oppressed of the world can be traced to the unpaid labor and theft of resources by capital.

And what makes this fundamentally possible? The private ownership of the global, socially created means of production by a tiny group of billionaires who dispose of this vast apparatus for their own profit. According to the United Nations Development Report of 1999, three billionaires had assets equal to the entire gross domestic product of 48 developing countries!

The world economy was and is daily created by the working class. Yet the fruits of this economy, the huge surplus, fall automatically into the hands of the owners of the factories, the mines, the offices and the land. They hire and fire. They decide to expand or contract production according to whether they will make a profit. They get title to the product even when they have never set foot anywhere near a factory or an office or a mine.

The profit system—the system of capitalist exploitation of labor—cannot exist without searching at home and abroad for labor to exploit and super-exploit. War is necessary to such a system. This has been proven by the entire history of capitalism, which has bred war after war, intervention after intervention—from the 1898 Spanish-American War in which Washington captured and colonized the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, to two world wars, the Korean and Vietnam wars, and all the way up to the present-day war in Afghanistan.

By the same token, the very monopolies that plunder the world and rely on the war machine to protect and expand their areas of exploitation are the same ones that control economic life in the United States.

With their vast wealth and the social control that flows from it—including control of the government and the media—they are responsible for all the homelessness, hunger, lack of medical care, unemployment, industrial disease, and destruction of the environment.

As the manufacturers of culture they are responsible for the racism that permeates society and all its consequences. They are behind the subjugation of women and the oppression of lesbians, gays, bi and trans people.

The only solution to the problem of war abroad is also the only solution to the problems of exploitation and oppression at home. That solution is to take the means of production out of the hands of the profiteers and put them in the hands of the working class and the oppressed—to run for human need and not for private greed—that is, socialism.

'I was a gangster for capitalism'

— Gen. Smedley Butler
United States Marine Corps

Marine Gen. Smedley Butler led U.S. military interventions in China, Central America and the Caribbean in the early 20th century, and later described his role in the frankest terms:

I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. ...

I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. ... I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912 ... I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. ...

Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given [Chicago gang leader] Al Capone a few hints. ... He ... operate[d] his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.

—From "War Is A Racket," (New York: Round Table Press, 1935)

So much for 'free trade'!

U.S. court convicts Canadian for trade with Cuba

By Gloria La Riva

James Sablazi, a Canadian, faces years in U.S. prison for selling water purification supplies to Cuba. Anywhere else in the world, such an act would be routine. But in the U.S. it is a crime.

While U.S. officials hypocritically trumpet the virtues of "free trade," they have devoted the last forty years to choking the commerce of one of the U.S.'s closest neighbors. The United States is the only country in the world that has an economic blockade against Cuba.

What is so unusual about the Sablazi case is that his conviction is the first time in U.S. history that someone from another country has been charged with violating the U.S. "Trading with the Enemy" law for trading with Cuba from his own country. Another Canadian associate of Sabzali's, Claude Gauthier, was also charged for business transactions with Cuba carried out entirely within Canada.

Sabzali was indicted by the U.S. Justice department on 75 counts on Oct. 5, 2000. After a seven-week trial in U.S. federal court, he was convicted in early April. Some of the charges were for actions he took selling products to Cuba for the Purolite company inside Canada, as a Canadian citizen. He conducted the business through his own Sabio Trading Co. in association with Purolite, a company based in Hamilton, Ontario.

Sabzali was acquitted of the charges that dealt with his business done entirely from Canada, but he was convicted on 21 other counts for his actions in the United States. Those actions were carried out after he accepted a full-time job with Purolite in 1996 in Philadelphia.

In one particularly ridiculous instance, Sabzali was convicted for the expenses reimbursement he approved for a Purolite business representative based in Canada, while Sabzali was working in Philadelphia.

Each charge carries a possible sentence of 10 years in jail and $500,000 in penalties.

Canada has normal trade relations with Cuba, and Canadian companies are among the largest investors and trading partners with Cuba.

To defy the notorious 1996 U.S. Helms-Burton law that for the first time tried to "internationalize" the U.S. blockade by extending it to third countries, Canada passed a law to prohibit Canadian firms from complying with Helms-Burton. It was an action by Canada to preserve its own economic interests vis-à-vis U.S. firms.

Despite the Canadian anti-blockade law, and an initial objection by Canada's ambassador to the U.S., the Canadian government did not intervene further on Sabzali's behalf. Gauthier is still in Canada and has been threatened by the U.S. government with prosecution if he ever sets foot in the U.S.

Since Sabzali's conviction, he has been confined to his Philadelphia home with an electronic monitoring device on his ankle until his sentencing in June. The U.S. government has seized title to his home.

U.S. blockade: an instrument of counter-revolution

The U.S. government is desperately attempting to stem growing investments in Cuba by other countries. It is the logic of U.S. imperialism: try to strangle Cuba economically, isolate Cuba politically, carry out and encourage sabotage and other terrorist actions when all else fails.

Five heroic Cubans are imprisoned right now in the U.S. for trying to monitor the actions of notorious terrorist groups that have operated with impunity for more than 43 years from U.S. soil.

The illegal economic blockade, a comprehensive assault on Cuba's sovereignty and revolution, has caused much suffering and casualties in the thousands among Cuba's people for the past 43 years. Yet the ultimate objective of the U.S., the destruction of the socialist revolution, has totally failed.

It is now roughly 12 years since the Soviet Union's trade accords with Cuba were abruptly cut off, due to that country's impending demise and pressure from the U.S.

Countless predictions of Cuba's collapse were echoed by an array of enemies within the U.S. ruling class. Even many sympathetic to Cuba believed it was impossible to avoid the worldwide trend of surrender by many countries in the socialist camp to capitalism in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Cuba faced the greatest challenge in the history of its revolution. In that time of terrible economic difficulties, Cuban President Fidel Castro rallied the people of Cuba to defend Cuba's socialist gains. In what was called the "Special Period in Time of Peace," resources were directed toward meeting basic needs of the population. Free health care and education would be maintained, while limited capitalist-style measures would be employed to revive the economy.

Most importantly, Castro vowed that if Cuba remains the last country to hold high the banner of socialism, the people will do so to the last drop of their blood.

The Communist Party of Cuba and all the mass organizations of women, workers, students, agricultural workers and youth were fully engaged in the struggle.

Only a socialist country with such a revolutionary leadership and a people so steeled in struggle and resistance could have weathered such a deep economic crisis and U.S. hostility.

U.S. imperialism's schemes of the early 1990s, new harsh laws designed to tighten the blockade, an increase in aggression and terrorist attacks, were all intensified with the aim of bringing Cuba down.

But Cuba has not only survived intact. It has emerged with a people more determined to defend the revolution. While so many countries in the Third World are suffering the devastation of inevitable capitalist crisis and neoliberal policies, Cuba's example in these times points to the only real alternative to capitalism: socialism.

While even relatively developed countries like Argentina are wracked by political and economic instability, Cuba is today in the midst of a nationwide campaign to raise the cultural and educational level of its population to even higher levels. The already exemplary educational system is being improved with computers in all schools.

Television and radio are being utilized to teach languages, history, geography and other fields to the whole population. Roundtable discussions on television every night educate the whole population to be aware of their common destiny with the world. While too few people in the U.S. know of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal who is on death row in Pennsylvania, in Cuba he is a universal symbol because of dissemination of his struggle in the media. And Cuba is a country with modest resources and a U.S. blockade bearing down on its economy!

Cuba's representatives speak out in international forums for a more just social and economic order in the world and to denounce the violence of capitalist plunder. Cuba is denouncing U.S. imperialism's atrocities from Afghanistan to Palestine, and inspiring the most oppressed of the world to resist.

That is the reason the U.S. blatantly ignores world opinion and continues its campaign against Cuba. And that is why it prosecutes U.S. citizens—and now those from other countries like James Sablazi—who travel to and conduct trade with Cuba.

'Free the Cuban 5!'



Left to right, Betty Fry, Gloria Verdieu, and Gloria La Riva, with a photo poster of the Cuban 5 political prisoners jailed in this country for trying to monitor right-wing terrorist actions planned against their island nation. La Riva was invited to speak on the case by the San Diego Friends of Cuba and the International Action Center. A very enthusiastic group of activists heard La Riva give background and update on this important struggle. After the meeting, people signed post cards for each of the five Cuban heroes, as well as a petition calling on President George Bush to release them. For more information on getting involved, contact Gloria Verdieu, email: dadji@aol.com; phone: (619) 255-4585.

—Story and photo by Bob McCubbin

What is imperialism?

Continued from page 6

Rather than just exporting goods to these underdeveloped countries, the monopolies started to export capital–that is, they built factories, hired local labor, and began to produce goods at much lower cost and higher profit than in their "home" countries.

Bosses tossed extra crumbs to some workers in the imperialist countries to keep class peace at home, while promoting racism and national chauvinism to stop workers from uniting across borders.

The big banks came to dominate the expansion process. Banks control the flow of money to the monopolies. Their representatives sit on the boards of most big industrial corporations and exert decisive influence over business decisions.

Lenin said these five characteristics define imperialism, or monopoly capitalism:

"1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life;

"2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this 'finance capital,' of a financial oligarchy;

"3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance;

"4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist combines which share the world among themselves;

"5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed."

Epoch of war and revolution

This territorial division of the world among the imperialists inevitably leads to war.

As the fortunes of each imperialist country rises or falls, those with the most power want to expand the proportion of the globe they control. Those whose grip is weakening hold on for dear life.

Rather than eliminating competition, monopoly capitalism raises it to a higher and deadlier level.

Sometimes the imperialists fight each

Pyongyang, north Korea

Celebrations display popular unity against Bush's threats

By Deirdre Griswold
Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea

People here in the socialist north of Korea are well aware of U.S. President George W. Bush's remarks branding their country as part of an "Axis of Evil." It has in no way dampened their ardor for their independent socialist system. On the contrary, they look on it as further proof of the irrationality and aggressive intentions of the U.S. rulers, and feel they must struggle even harder to defend their national sovereignty.

Beginning on the evening of April 14, two days of celebrations honored the birth 90 years ago of Kim Il Sung, the man everyone here calls the Great Leader of the Korean people. Kim's military and political skills led them to victory in two wars against imperialist invaders—first Japan and later the U.S.

Kim died in 1994, at a time of great difficulty for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The economic impact of the demise of the Soviet Union and other European socialist states was exacerbated by several years of extreme drought in Korea followed by floods that wiped out crops and destroyed topsoil and local infrastructure.

The DPRK has still not fully recovered from these blows, and in particular suffered power shortages after the U.S. dragged its feet on an agreement to deliver fuel oil in exchange for north Korea abandoning construction of a nuclear reactor. Nevertheless, Koreans today are celebrating. The April 15 holiday is the occasion of immense national pride in Korea's achievements under Kim Il Sung's leadership. It is also a celebration of the continuity of leadership represented by unity around his successor, Kim Jong Il, who is pledged to follow the course of national independence and socialist construction charted by Kim Il Sung.

This has been a harsh winter, but today in Pyongyang the willows are green, the azaleas and forsythia are in bloom, and women stroll the streets in bright costumes for the national holiday. On the evening of April 14, tens of thousands of elementary and high school students, dancers, singers, athletes and army irregulars put on a spectacular pageant and display of mass gymnastics for a crowd of 100,000 people. The irregulars in their brown uniforms are part of the vast pool of women and men who have received military training and can be mobilized in the event of any national emergency.

WW EDITOR REPORTS FROM NORTH KOREA

The venue was May Day Stadium, named in honor of the international holiday that came out of the struggle of workers in Chicago in 1886. This beautiful and futuristic structure built on an island in this capital city looks from a distance like a giant scallop shell. It is just one of Pyongyang's architectural marvels which make it truly one of the most beautiful cities in the world. This fact can only be fully appreciated in light of Pyongyang's history: During the 1950-53 war, U.S. planes destroyed every building over one story high in all of north Korea and left the country in ruins. The entire city was rebuilt from scratch.

How were they able to do so much? At the stadium, the coordination and precision of the mass gymnastics and dancing—before a backdrop of ever-changing scenery provided by thousands of students with flashcards—gave some idea of the Koreans' genius for large-scale organization.

As they flipped rapidly from one color to the next, their young voices punctuating each maneuver with a staccato shout, the high school students created vast mosaic-scenes from Korean history, revolutionary slogans, even special effects like rippling grass and twinkling stars. In front of them, on the field, dancers and acrobats carried out dazzling routines illustrating the themes on the backdrop. At one moment, graceful dancers would weave intricate patterns of color and motion. A quick scene change and thousands of athletes would be on the field setting up four-level human pyramids. A sea of small kids twirling hoops or jumping rope in tandem would replace them.

At one point, aerialists involved in this matchless spectacle were all volunteers who had honed their skills over months of practice.

The spirit of these young people was undeniable. When the program was over and they left the stadium in large groups, they walked arm in arm through the night, often singing as they went.

Many Koreans from abroad—Japan, China and the United States—were in the audience. So were solidarity delegations from scores of countries, who had decided to come to north Korea at this time as a deliberate answer to Bush's bullying words.

The theme of this great pageant was the unity of the Korean people behind Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. It was a celebration of national pride at having defeated the efforts of two imperialisms to reduce their country to colonial slavery. And it was a reaffirmation of the DPRK's socialist system, which has kept it from falling under the sway of the transnational banks and corporations that dictate to most of the world.

It was also a sensitive expression of the great pain felt by the people over Korea's division. Woven into the performances was the legend of Arirang—a tale of the separation of a husband and wife that is a metaphor for the millions of families broken up by Korea's division. The biggest obstacle to reunification is U.S. military occupation of the south, which began in 1945 and still has not ended.

The audience in May Day Stadium cheered the loudest for an acrobatic dance performed by a young woman soldier in which she single-handedly, using incredible martial arts skills, dispatched a whole group of male dancers dressed in U.S. military uniforms.

"We have nothing against the people of the United States," said a guide to some international visitors after the performance. "But if the U.S. ever attacks us again, we will fight to the last person."

LENIN:
'Capitalism is greatest oppressor of nations'

Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, one that has been reached only in the 20th century. Capitalism began to feel cramped within the old national states, without the formation of which it could not overthrow feudalism.

Capitalism has brought about such economic concentration that entire branches of industry are in the hands of syndicates, trusts, or corporations of billionaires; almost the entire globe has been parceled out among the "giants of capital," either in the form of colonies, or through the entangling of foreign countries by thousands of threads of financial exploitation.

Free trade and competition have been superseded by tendencies towards monopoly, towards seizure of lands for the investment of capital, for the export of raw materials, etc. Capitalism, formerly a liberator of nations, has now, in its imperialist stage, become the greatest oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, it has become a reactionary force.

It has developed the productive forces to such an extent that humanity must either pass over to socialism, or for years, nay, decades, witness armed conflicts of the "great" nations for an artificial maintenance of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges, and all sorts of national oppression.

From "Socialism and War," 1915.

other directly. That was the case during World War I, when Lenin wrote his booklet on imperialism, and World War II.

At other times they fight for domination through local proxies, like the U.S./German rivalry that tore apart Yugoslavia. But both imperialist powers united to destroy the Milosevic regime when it resisted their plans.

Finally, there are the wars of conquest fought to control strategic countries like Afghanistan, or against governments and popular movements that resist imperialist domination, like Iraq or Colombia's FARC-EP.

But just as inevitably, the concentration of wealth and political power into fewer hands leads to rebellions and revolutions. Imperialism contains within itself the seeds of its own demise.

Social production vs. private ownership

By expanding capitalist production all over the globe, imperialism has created a huge working class with nothing to lose and everything to gain by fighting for power.

Imperialism has made production social. That means thousands of workers, often from dozens of countries, are involved in the production, distribution and exchange of a single product or service.

Yet the fruits of this collective labor are robbed from the workers. The bosses, who own the factories, stores, etc., take it for themselves in the form of profit. Wages paid to the workers often don't cover the basic necessities of life. Others just get by, while millions go jobless.

But as Lenin pointed out, the monopolies are ripe for the workers to take over and run themselves–to create social ownership in harmony with social production.

Ultimately, that's how imperialism can be defeated: by targeting the diseased economic system, not just its political symptoms.

It's not enough to change a government policy or the party in power. The whole system must be overturned and replaced by one that puts people's needs first.

Across U.S.

Protesters challenge Bush/Sharon lies



Pro-Palestinian protest at the University of Michigan.

By Leslie Feinberg

Solidarity with the Palestinian struggle is spilling into streets across the United States. The diversity is striking: young and old, Muslims and Jews, believers and non-believers, African Americans and Latinos, U.S.-born and immigrants.

The depth and breadth of support is unprecedented, from students taking over a university building in Berkeley, Calif., to activists chaining themselves to Texaco gas pumps in Albuquerque, N.M.

As week three of the demonstrations closed, momentum was still building. These waves of unity with the Palestine liberation struggle are expected to crest April 20 in mass protests at the White House and in San Francisco.

The week before the April 20 protests week saw marches and rallies in towns and large metropolises, campuses large and small.

NEW YORK: Rain didn't stop an outpouring for an **April 12** rally to stop genocide against Palestinians. The Metropolitan Muslim Federation called the midday, midtown Manhattan protest. Organizers announced from the stage that 20,000 were gathered. They pressed demands that the Israeli army immediately withdraw from occupied lands and end the occupation, that Ariel Sharon be indicted for war crimes, that U.S. aid to Israel end, for the right of return for Palestinians and the right of Palestinians to a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital.



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Palestinians and their supporters demonstrate in front of the Israeli Consulate in San Francisco, April 12.

The event, which drew many Palestinian and Arab families, was sponsored by the Arab Muslim American Foundation, Muslim American Society, Islamic Association for Palestine, American Muslim Union, American Muslim Alliance, International Action Center, Al-Awda Palestine Right of Return Coalition, National Muslim Merchants Association, American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and Palestine American Congress.

Hillel Cohen, a Jewish-American unionist, received thunderous cheers when he read from a resolution he had introduced, and had been passed, at a meeting of the health-care union 1199 Delegates' Council, Health Systems I-V. The resolution called for an end to the Israeli occupation, a stop to U.S. military aid for Israel and support of the Palestinian right of return.

On **April 15**, New York organizers of the April 20 March on the White House reported a terrific response when they distributed leaflets denouncing the killing of Palestinians to thousands of last-minute tax filers lined up to mail their returns at the central New York Post Office. Leaflets pointed out that the U.S. uses tax dollars to arm the Israeli repression.

An **April 11** Brooklyn meeting in support of Palestine took place at the Ethical Culture Society despite threats. The panel included Lebanese-American activist Joyce Chediac, Larry Holmes from the International Act Now to Stop War & End Racism coalition, Bobby Khan of the Coney Island Avenue Project that is protesting the beating of a South Asian immigrant by police, anti-racist and lesbian activist Minnie Bruce Pratt, and former Israeli Defense Forces soldier Michael Bar-Am.

CHICAGO: For the third time in less than two weeks, thousands of people, mainly from the Arab and Muslim communities, held a militant march and rally to protest the continuing violence against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The latest demonstration focused on the role of the United States in backing the Israeli massacres.

CLEVELAND: Palestinians and their supporters took to the downtown streets on April 13. The protest, called by the Northeast Ohio Radical Action Network, brought together youths from Cleveland and nearby college campuses and several hundred members of the Arab and Muslim communities. It was the biggest protest to take place in Cleveland since Sept. 11. Too big for the sidewalk, the demonstration took up a lane of traffic in the main thoroughfares, receiving non-stop car honks of support by motorists along the way.

Steady rain did not deter the demonstrators. "I would march in a typhoon over this issue," said Peoples Fightback representative Susan Schnur. "I'm Jewish and I'm against the occupation." Other speakers urged the crowd to get on the buses for the April 20 demonstration against war and racism and in support of Palestine.

MILWAUKEE: In one of the biggest pro-Palestinian rallies in recent memory, more than 400 Palestinians young and old, together with their supporters, took to the streets on April 14. They demanded an immediate end to the U.S.-Israeli massacres and occupations and all U.S. aid to the Zionist state. They denounced Ariel Sharon as a war criminal and called for the creation of a long-denied Palestinian

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Want to fight anti-Semitism?

Stand up for Palestinian rights!

By Leslie Feinberg

As if a half-century of Israeli crimes against the Palestinian nation is not monstrous enough, they are carried out in the name of all Jewish people. But Zionism does not represent all Jewish people. Zionism is a reactionary, racist ideology.

Zionism is colonialism.

The Israeli settler state, claiming to establish a "homeland" for Jews, has driven millions of Palestinians from their homeland into a forced Diaspora. And it has done so at the behest of the imperial powers that stand behind its military and sponsor its very existence.

Israel was never established by the imperialist powers to be a safe haven for Jews. The capitalist governments of Western Europe and the United States, riddled with anti-Semitism, could have cared less when the Nazis were massacring Jews and other peoples. They saw the advance of Hitler's armies as a weapon against their main class enemy: the Soviet Union. And they applauded the fascist crushing of the labor unions.

The Pentagon brass even rebuffed cries to bomb the rail lines used to transport boxcars jam-packed with victims into the concentration camps. And the U.S. turned away Jewish refugees who tried to reach the shores of North America after the war.

Instead, what a cruel pretext it was indeed to herd Jewish people, fleeing Europe after World War II, into a "safe haven from persecution." That "haven" became so dangerous and precarious because it meant becoming the rulers of an apartheid settler regime to crush Palestinian resistance and hold back the tide of the Arab revolutions. And the Zionist state was "birthed" out of massacres, state terror and military occupation.

Those who profit from the well-armed colonial outpost today also don't give a damn about Palestinian lives or Jewish lives. They see Israel as a giant, unsinkable aircraft carrier in the middle of the Middle East, as officials like Casper Weinberger have characterized it.

It's about oil and who controls the profits—from the moment it's pumped out of the ground until it arrives in the form of cash in bank vaults.

The creation of the Zionist settler state, bristling with machine guns and missiles, tanks and fighter jets provided by a munificent U.S. military-industrial complex, has fanned the flames of anti-Semitism by carrying out its bloody repression of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples in the name of a "Jewish state."

And Israel's complicity with openly anti-Semitic regimes—from Chile to Argentina to apartheid South Africa—only illuminates more clearly that the establishment of the settler state was never about fighting persecution of Jewish people.

But new ranks of Jews, young and old, are demonstrating an effective approach to battling anti-Semitism: They are fighting on behalf of Palestinian rights.

Scores of young Jews are going to jail rather than be inducted into the Israeli Defense Forces. Courageous Israeli Jews have tried to bring urgently needed supplies past the military cordons into Jenin and other besieged Palestinian towns and refugee camps.

Many Jews from around the world, particularly from the United States, rushed to Palestine in recent weeks when Israel carried out its brutal re-occupation. These "internationals" have put their own lives on the line to support their Palestinian sisters and brothers and to get news out about the bloody siege.

Jewish people of all ages in this country have swelled the ranks of pro-Palestinian protests in cities, towns and campuses from coast to coast. And at these rallies, even those that are predominately Arab or Muslim, Jewish speakers in support of Palestinian rights are thunderously cheered.

That is because the Palestinian liberation movement is not motivated by anti-Semitism, but by anti-colonialism.

Want to defeat anti-Semitism? Stand up against Zionism. Stand up for Palestinian freedom.

Worldwide support swells for Palestinians

By G. Dunkel

In the past three weeks, thousands of demonstrations and protests throughout the world have supported the Palestinian people's heroic resistance against Israeli aggression. According to news reports, almost all of these demonstrations have protested the absolutely essential ingredient: U.S. military, financial and political support for Israeli aggression.

The most militant, angriest protests have taken place in the Arab world, especially in **Jordan** and **Egypt**, both of which have diplomatic relations with Israel. Jordan's Interior Minister Kaftan Majalin told Agence France Press (April 9) that 374 protests and rallies against Israel have taken place since March 29, when the Israeli offensive started. Some 138 cops have been injured in them and 182 vehicles, including 95 cop cars, damaged. One 10-year-old Palestinian boy was killed by a tear-gas canister, according to his parents.

The most intense struggles have taken place in **Amman**, the capital of Jordan, when protesters try to march on the Israeli or U.S. embassy.

The Egyptian authorities have banned demonstrations since 1981, when President Anwar Sadat, who had signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, was assassinated. Despite the ban, as many as 80,000 people in a single day have taken to the streets and confronted the cops, mainly in **Cairo**, **Alexandria**, and **other major cities**.

An Egyptian university student was killed April 9 in Alexandria when police shot rubber-coated bullets at students denouncing U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to Cairo.

The victim, Mohammed Ali al-Sayyed al-Saaa, was a business student at the University of Alexandria. His death has become a symbol of the Egyptian people's boiling anger in the face of harsh repression.

Some 200 people, mostly students but also including 40 cops, were wounded badly enough in this confrontation that they had to be taken to the Alexandria hospital. The clashes erupted when the 7,000 students taking part in the protest left the campus and headed for a nearby U.S. cultural center.

"Colin Powell get out of here, our country will remain free," protesters chanted. They also demanded, "Sell Mubarak, buy arms for the Palestinians," referring to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese also protested Powell's visit to Beirut, Lebanon. Some burned U.S. and Israeli flags.

In Saudi Arabia where a feudal monarchy still rules, telethons urge people to donate jewels and other property to be sold for the Palestinian people. U.S.-based supporters of Israel have denounced the telethons for raising "blood money." But for the Saudi rulers, these efforts provide an outlet for popular anger and solidarity that does not threaten the regime. Saudi telethons and similar ones in the Gulf emirates have raised about $200 million.

Despite the Saudi ban on demonstrations, in the first week of April some 2,000 people protested angrily outside the U.S. consulate in the eastern city of Dhahran. Another 2,500 pro-Palestinian demonstrators protested outside the nearby town of al-Qatif. (Toronto Star, April 6)

In Israel itself on April 11, some 2,000 Jewish and Arab women marched from Jerusalem to Kalandia, a checkpoint at the entrance to Ramallah, to show solidarity with a Palestinian women's group stuck on the other side. A special army roadblock kept the marchers from reaching their goal.

Support in Africa

In an interview with the Pan-African News Agency, the Palestinian ambassador to Senegal, Said Abbassi, said he was grateful for the mobilization and solidarity of the people of Africa for the Palestinian cause. He said: "Today Palestine's fight against racism and occupation is the same one that Africa has gone through to gain independence. The demonstrations staged throughout Africa are meant to send a strong message to Palestinian people to tell them that they are not alone in this nasty war imposed by Israel."

On April 13 in **Dakar**, the capital of **Senegal**, over 6,000 people marched from the Grand Mosque to the Israeli Embassy, chanting "Free, free Palestine," and carrying signs against the aggression of the Zionist state and George W. Bush's support of butchery. **Uganda** also saw a smaller demonstration the same day, organized in the religious community.

Over 1.5 million people marched in **Khartoum**, **Sudan**, April 8 to denounce Israeli aggression and U.S. complicity. They destroyed effigies of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, while shouting, "Death to Sharon," and "Down, Down U-S-A, We will not be ruled by the C-I-A." This was the biggest demonstration in the Sudan in decades.

In **South Africa**, the African National Congress and the main labor union confederation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, are planning for a two-week series of major demonstrations beginning April 19. In **Pretoria**, a march to the Israeli and the U.S. embassies is planned to kick off the protests.

"The ongoing military invasion and reoccupation of Palestinian-controlled territories by the state of Israel is a blatant violation of human rights and an attempt to deny national liberation to the people of Palestine. This amounts to an act of state terrorism by the Israeli government," said ANC General Secretary David Makhura.

In **Cape Town** on April 11, about 200 pro-Palestine supporters picketed outside the U.S. Consulate to protest against the "U.S.'s continued bankrolling of the Israeli occupation of Palestine." The Palestinian Solidarity Group and COSATU organized the picket. COSATU members also participated in a prayer service later that day. Both events drew wide coverage in the South African media.

Support in Europe

The weekend of April 12-14 saw some 30,000 people march through **London**, chanting, "Down with Israel," and "Jihad," the traditional Muslim appeal for holy war. Some protesters burned Israeli and U.S. flags. The Association of British Muslims called this protest.

Some 30,000 people in **many German cities** joined solidarity protests. The biggest was in **Berlin**, where 13,000 people marched from the capital's famous Alexanderplatz to Potsdamerplatz, an area between the old East and West Berlin. Another 7,000 gathered in **Frankfurt**; there were 5,000 in **Duesseldorf** and smaller numbers in other Germany cities.

In the **Netherlands**, tens of thousands marched through **Amsterdam** April 13 in a demonstration organized by the Dutch

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From the Warsaw Ghetto to Jenin

Oppression fuels heroic resistance

"In order to prepare properly for the next campaign, one of the highest Israeli officers in the territories said not long ago, it's justified and in fact essential to learn from every possible source. If the mission will be to seize a densely populated refugee camp, or take over the casbah in Nablus …then he must first analyze and internalize the lessons of earlier battles–even, however shocking it may sound, even how the German army fought in the Warsaw ghetto."

—From the Israeli daily Ha'aretz (Jan. 25)

By Michael Kramer

At 6 a.m. on April 19, 1943, more than 2,000 fascist SS troops entered the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw in Nazi-occupied Poland. Their mission was to annihilate the remaining inhabitants—those who had survived more than three years of starvation, slave labor and "involuntary resettlement" to Auschwitz and other death camps.

Unlike previous "round-ups," however, the fascists were met with machine-gun fire and homemade Molotov cocktails. By 5 p.m., the Nazis were forced to retreat, having suffered more than 200 casualties.

Though there had been Jewish resistance before—in the form of illegal newspapers, posters, clandestine meetings and isolated armed actions—this was the first time that such large formations of Nazi troops were confronted. Jewish resistance was tenacious, as documented by Ber Mark, the late director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, in his book "Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto."

The military organization of the ghetto took place in October 1942 when the Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa—Jewish Combat Organization or ZOB—was formed. By the end of that month the first successful act had been carried out: the execution of the Nazi-appointed traitor, the chief of the Jewish police. Through militant struggle, the ZOB established its legitimacy and leadership. The force demonstrated its role as the ghetto population's defender by eliminating Jewish collaborators and Gestapo agents.

Only 60,000 Jews were left in the ghetto at that point. A year before, the population had been 500,000.

The Nazis planned to finish their dirty work on April 20, which was Hitler's birthday. Instead, April 20 proved to be another defeat for the fascists when the Jewish freedom fighters detonated a mine that killed more than 100 SS troops.

Building by building and block by block, the anti-fascists fought back. The ZOB had prepared the struggle in advance, constructing a labyrinth of bunkers, tunnels and secret hideouts.

Polish workers aid ghetto

Polish communists smuggled arms and ammunition through the sewer system into the ghetto. They also attacked Nazi military units from the rear.

Women played a major role in the resistance as combatants.

The fighting continued for weeks. When the Nazis set fire to ghetto buildings the ZOB countered by igniting warehouses of fascist-expropriated Jewish property.

Nazis were forced to call in long-range artillery and the air force.

Armed with dogs, gas and flame throwers, the Nazis began to hunt down the Jews. On May 8, the ZOB headquarters was overrun.

Seventy-five ZOB survivors escaped from the blockaded ghetto on May 10.

By May 16, the 28th day of fighting, the ghetto no longer existed. But snipers continued the resistance as late as November 1943.

Jenin: hero city

Almost 59 years after the Nazis launched their "final solution" attack on the Jewish population of the Warsaw Ghetto, the U.S.-armed-and-financed Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), fighting under the banner of apartheid-like Zionism, launched their attack on the Palestinian population of the city of Jenin in the West Bank region of Palestine.

A refugee camp established there in 1953, located within the municipal boundaries of the city, was especially targeted.

The Israeli commanders studied WW II-era Nazi military history well: The whole Palestinian population of the refugee camp was targeted whether or not they were combatants. Almost half of the approximately 13,000 residents of the camp were either children or elders.

Air strikes were called in on densely populated neighborhoods. Bulldozers leveled residential areas of the camp while whole families were still inside their homes. The water distribution system and electric power lines were destroyed.

Yet the IDF commanders forgot to study how oppressed people fight back when they have nothing to lose and their backs are against the wall. The Israelis took heavy casualties in the battle of Jenin.

And the IDF commanders should study what happened to the Nazi commanders who led the attack on the Warsaw Ghetto. When the war was over they were tried and convicted as war criminals.

Mass uprising defeats CIA coup in Venezuela

Continued from page 1

country, advocating what he described as a "Bolivarian Revolution" against the pro-U.S. Venezuelan oligarchy. Named for the great South American independence leader Simon Bolivar, Bolivarianism has come to mean using Venezuela's wealth for the benefit of the people of Latin America, and Latin American unity against U.S. domination.

His 1998 election was the result of an alliance between his Fifth Republic Movement, based on progressive junior military officers and rank-and-file soldiers, and the parties of the working class and left.

His new government began to dismantle the political power base of the rich oligarchy. The two main political parties of the ruling class—the Democratic Alliance and the Social Christian COPEI party—essentially collapsed. A new constitution and National Assembly enshrined many of the key progressive political features of the new Bolivarian Republic.

In the arena of foreign relations, the Chávez government steered clear of the traditional servile position to U.S. imperialism. Chávez traveled to visit Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. He encouraged an independent OPEC. He brokered a deal providing Cuba with oil at terms favorable to Havana. He refused to participate in the Pentagon's military campaign against Colombia's Marxist insurgencies.

Beginning in June, the Venezuelan government began to turn its attention from the political arena to the economy. In November, Chávez signed a package of 49 laws aimed at addressing the social disparities in the country. At the heart of these laws were a land reform law and legislation aimed at restricting the power of the old oligarchy in the state industries, especially the state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela.

The pro-U.S. ruling class in Venezuela had been grumbling since the 1998 elections about Chávez's independent foreign policy and populist rhetoric. But when he began to make moves that affected their vast wealth and private property, grumbling changed to outright opposition.

Bosses lead anti-Chávez opposition

The center of the opposition to the Chávez government is Fedecamaras, the national association of businesses. On Dec. 10, business and industry bosses shut their doors in a lockout aimed at forcing Chávez to reverse his economic policies.

The bosses in Fedecamaras have been able to count on the support of the reactionary leadership of the CTV trade union federation. The CTV has traditionally been an organ of the Democratic Action party, one of the two parties of the traditional Venezuelan elite. It claims to represent about 18 percent of the workforce, almost entirely in the better-paid industries.

Beyond being utterly corrupt and hated by millions of Venezuelan workers, the CTV leadership is completely in the political thrall of the pro-imperialist elite. For example, CTV leaders were among the first to condemn the Venezuelan government's oil deal with Cuba.

The April 12 coup attempt was preceded by three days of demonstrations sponsored by Fedecamaras and backed by the CTV. The pretext for the demonstrations was Chávez's attempts to restrict the power of the old political elite in the Petroleos de Venezuela management.

Despite the wild encouragement by all the main press in Venezuela—still owned and managed by elements of the ruling class—the protests failed to generate support beyond the wealthier middle classes. The British Independent described the scene in the capital city of Caracas on April 11, the second day of protests: "In the downtown area and western districts of the capital, generally poorer than the east, business continued almost as normal with most people ignoring the strike call. Traffic jammed the streets as usual and most shops opened."

Two of the main military coup plotters, Army Commander in Chief Efrain Vasquez and Gen. Ramirez Poveda, were graduates of the infamous U.S. School of the Americas, a school with a long list of coup-plotters and death-squad organizers among its alumni.

Lacking broad support, the counter-revolutionary organizers decided to stage a provocation. On April 11, they led a demonstration to face off against Chávez supporters gathered near the presidential palace in Miraflores.

Chávez ordered the National Guard to separate the two demonstrations. But the rightists would not be denied their pretext for violence. Sharpshooters fired into the pro-Chávez crowd, killing two people outright. Police loyal to the anti-Chávez mayor of Caracas, Alfredo Peña, also opened fire into the pro-Chávez demonstration.

Of the 11 people reported killed, six were Chávez supporters. Observers report that most of the hundreds wounded in the ensuing battle also came from the pro-Chávez ranks.

The battle served its purpose. During the early morning hours of April 12, elements of the military arrested Chávez and declared Fedecamaras head Pedro Carmona president.

The illegitimate government immediately showed its reactionary face. The National Assembly, a hallmark of Chávez's democratization campaign, was abolished and Chávez supporters were driven underground. All of Chávez's economic laws were rescinded.

A Petroleos de Venezuela manager, Edgar Paredes, told a press conference on April 12: "Not a single barrel of oil for Cuba."

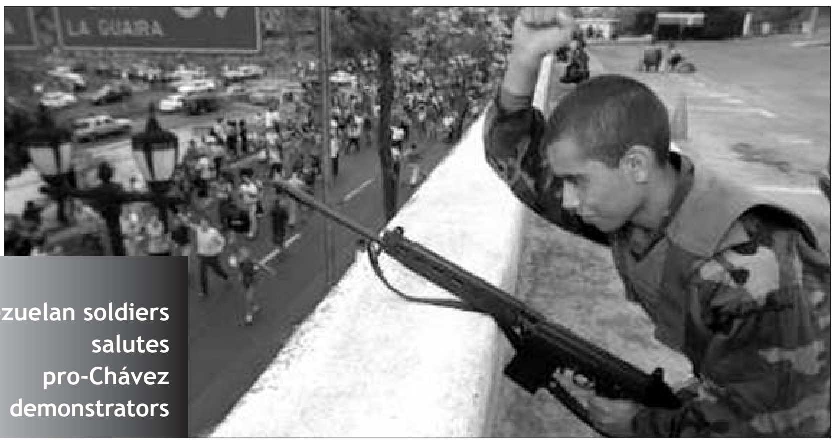
Another coup 'Made in the USA'

The coup model was time tested and had all the markings of a plot hatched by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The alliance of the business elite with the reactionary trade union leadership; the attempt to use connections with the high command in the interests of big capital; the pretext of mass disturbances to justify military intervention to "restore law and order"—all these elements have been used in U.S.-backed coups, most notably in 1973 Chile.

Despite the refusal of most of the world to recognize the coup—the 19-nation Rio Group of Latin American nations condemned the "interruption of constitutional order" on April 13—the United States government openly embraced the coup plotters.

A growing mountain of evidence shows the extent to which the U.S. was involved in the coup:

- On April 16, the Bush administration acknowledged that Otto Reich, assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere affairs, was in phone contact with the coup leaders on the morning of the attempted takeover. The April 17 New York Times reported that the admission gives the appearance that Reich was "stage-managing the takeover." Reich has a long history of working with CIA counter-revolutionary operations in Latin America, particularly against Cuba and Nicaragua.
- The April 14 edition of the STRATFOR newsletter, a U.S.-based think tank, details reports that both the CIA and the State Department had a hand in the events leading up to the coup.
- An April 15 Reuters report details Chávez's account of a U.S.-registered civilian plane parked nearby to where he was imprisoned during the coup.
- The April 16 New York Times carried the closest thing a U.S. government official comes to admitting involvement. "We were not discouraging people" from making the coup, according to "a Defense Department official who is involved in the development of policy toward Venezuela."
- The April 22 issue of Newsweek magazine reported that elements of the Venezuelan military had been in contact with the U.S. embassy in February to discuss plans for a coup. The U.S. government acknowledges the meeting but denies encouraging the coup.
- In February, the AFL-CIO joined forces with the notoriously anti-communist National Endowment for Democracy to host leaders of the right-wing CTV labor federation in Washington. The NED played a leading role in coordinating the political campaign against the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.
- Two of the main military coup plotters, Army Commander in Chief Efrain Vasquez and Gen. Ramirez Poveda, were graduates of the infamous U.S. School of the Americas, a school with a long list of coup-plotters and death-squad organizers among its alumni.



Venezuelan soldiers salutes pro-Chávez demonstrators

The masses strike back

Despite the alliance between Venezuelan reactionaries and the Bush administration, an outpouring of the country's poor and oppressed classes turned back the overthrow of the Chávez government.

In Caracas, some 200,000 people from the poor and working class neighborhoods descended on the Presidential Palace in Miraflores demanding Chávez's return. Barricades went up across the city. Masses of people clashed with anti-Chávez police units. Hundreds of Chávez supporters were killed or wounded in the clashes.

Peasants from across Venezuela set out for Caracas in buses to protest the coup.

The mass outpourings strengthened the resolve of pro-Chávez units in the military. Throughout the city, troops wearing the signature red berets of Chávez supporters joined demonstrations and refused to fire on the crowds. Rank-and-file soldiers fraternized with the people.

The force of the mass intervention split away the military rank and file and junior officers, along with some of the higher officers undoubtedly anxious to be found on the winning side, from the reactionary coup plotters.

Within a day, the pressure of the pro-Chávez masses forced the collapse of the coup from within. Fedecamaras head Carmona resigned as "interim president" on the evening of April 13. Chávez was released from prison early in the morning of April 14.

Carmona and some 100 other military and political participants in the coup were arrested and charged with rebellion, although many were later released to house arrest pending trial.

Which way forward?

The Venezuelan people's victory in overturning the U.S.-sponsored coup electrified progressive and working-class partisans across Latin America and the world. It was a major embarrassment for U.S. imperialism, which arrogantly underestimated the power of the masses and overestimated its own ability to rule by fiat.

In an unbelievable show of cynicism, Condoleeza Rice, George Bush's National Security Adviser and defender of the coup plotters, called for Chávez to "respect constitutional processes" following his return to power.

"This is no time for a witch hunt," she warned.

In fact, Chávez's first messages upon returning to power were of conciliation. He urged his supporters to return to their homes peacefully. He called for national unity. "I haven't any thirst for revenge," he said in a 5:00 a.m. address on April 14.

On April 16, Chávez invited his political opponents to take part in an advisory council that would discuss differences, a move that won guarded support from the U.S. State Department.

But in a signal that he was not making an about face on his policies, he also announced that oil would again flow to Cuba.

The pro-Chávez forces, those committed to the process they call a Bolivarian Revolution, are in a position of unprecedented strength. They have survived the first attempt at counter-revolution. The coup authors are running for cover.

Chávez's loyalists would have every legal basis to prosecute the organizations involved in the coup—from the Catholic Church hierarchy to the reactionary CTV leadership to the Fedecamaras business owners and landlords. They would be perfectly within their rights to open a massive investigation of all these plotters and their ties to U.S. imperialism.

The masses of poor and working people have shown their willingness to fight to advance the revolutionary process that Chávez is leading.

The main question is the extent to which the pro-Chávez forces are organized to carry out these tasks. The central task in any revolution is the creation of organs of popular power that can fight for and defend the class interests of the revolutionary classes.

Already, Chávez has promoted the "Bolivarian circles," armed neighborhood groups to defend the Bolivarian Revolution, for exactly this purpose. It is no accident that one of the main military tasks of the coup regime was aimed at the Bolivarian circles.

The Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela has survived its first major test. Its ability to withstand future assaults and coup attempts, as well as its ability to address the social needs of the working classes, will depend on the leadership's ability to deepen the organization of the poor and working classes.

Oppressed vs. oppressors

Why Colombia's struggle deserves solidarity

By Teresa Gutierrez

Thousands of activists will gather in Washington April 19-22 to demonstrate against Plan Colombia in actions called by the Colombia Mobilization, a coalition of several important anti-war and solidarity organizations. The demonstrations are among many historic events taking place that weekend in Washington, San Francisco, and around the world.

The growing movement against Plan Colombia is more than just a welcome development. It is decisive.

The struggle in Colombia has become one of the most important in Latin America, along with the critical situations in Venezuela, Argentina and Vieques, Puerto Rico. As a result, stepped-up actions against Plan Colombia by the solidarity and anti-war movement become ever more urgent.

In fact, solidarity with all the people of Latin America and the Caribbean is more important than ever as the continent as a whole seethes with both struggle and repression, becoming a cauldron ready to erupt in revolutionary turbulence at any moment.

Colombia has the distinct dishonor of being the hemisphere's number-one recipient of U.S. aid. Washington will spend over $2 billion in the Andean nation by the end of 2005.

What is this enormous amount of money for? Is it being spent to resolve the problem of the 2 million displaced Colombians? Will it be used to bring down the more than 20-percent unemployment rate?

Of course not. This vast amount of money is solely for U.S. military intervention in Colombia.

Money robbed from poor and working people in this country—money that could go to education or health care—is to be used instead against those who are fighting for social change in Colombia.

Plan Colombia will do nothing to eradicate the decades-long conflict in Colombia. In fact, it will exacerbate it.

U.S. "Operation Death"

On Feb. 20, Colombian President Andres Pastrana broke off talks with Colombia's largest insurgent group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP). Pastrana, backed by the U.S. government, shut down the "zona de despeje"—a demilitarized zone about the size of Switzerland where the FARC-EP could carry out talks without paramilitary or government intervention.

The zone was set up as the place to conduct dialogues between the FARC and the Pastrana government three years ago. It was not a gift from Pastrana; the zone was already under the control of the FARC-EP.

The breakdown of that dialogue and the entry of troops into the demilitarized zone reflected a hardening by the Colombian government. Washington was pushing Pastrana, and the oligarchy as a whole, as result of recent political developments.

President George Bush's "war on terrorism" demanded that the Colombian government also ratchet up its war against the people's struggle. The Feb. 20 decision to shut down the dialogue zone has resulted in an escalation of the war in Colombia—exactly what the Bush administration wanted.

On March 27 the Washington Post reported: "U.S. lawmakers are deciding whether more help from the U.S. could tilt the balance toward Colombia's armed forces. The additional aid would result from a U.S. rule change allowing the Colombian military to use 80 transport helicopters donated for use only against the drug trade to be employed directly against the guerrillas. It would also entail additional electronic intelligence sharing with Colombian forces."

The U.S. military offensive is diabolically named "Thanatos," a Greek mythological figure for death.

The "Thanatos" operation will not be directed against the Colombian death squads, although they have committed the most vile and despicable atrocities in Colombia.

This is another reason the U.S. movement against Plan Colombia is so critical. Every day the situation in Colombia becomes more polarized. The decades-long civil war is escalating. The horrid death squads, particularly the AUC—the so-called Self-Defense Units of Colombia—are becoming more active.

They operate with impunity. They carry out rapes, massacres, suffocations, torture and terror.

Human Rights Watch reports that in the first 10 months of 2001, 92 massacres were carried out, primarily by the death squads.

The death squads don't operate on their own. Neither the U.S. nor Colombian government can be let off the hook. The Colombian military—many of its officers trained at the School of Americas run by the Pentagon in Georgia—is known to be in cahoots with the fascist thugs from the AUC.

Human-rights organizations from Colombia and abroad have documented that the Colombian military not only turns its back while atrocities are carried out. Many of its number directly carry out the atrocities themselves. It has been repeatedly shown that death squad members are in the military.

This same military that has the blood of the Colombian people on its hands is growing by leaps and bounds. The Los Angeles Times reports that in the last three years, the military grew from 20,000 to 50,000 troops. And the government plans to add 10,000 more soldiers in the next two years.

Washington calls the shots

In Colombia, as around the world, post-Sept. 11 developments have meant that all those fighting for social change are now labeled terrorists by U.S. imperialism and its stooges. Pastrana has invoked the word almost as many times as George W. Bush.

Trying to drive a decisive wedge between the Colombian masses and the rebels, who are the main targets of the "terrorism" diatribe, Pastrana constantly announces large bounties against the rebels. Pastrana is indeed adopting all the belligerent and bellicose language of imperialism.

But who is really calling the shots in Colombia? Washington.

In March, the Bush administration had a U.S. federal grand jury indict three members of the FARC on drug trafficking charges. This was the first time the United States had indicted Colombian rebels on drug charges. The Bush administration has hypocritically used the events of Sept. 11 to denounce certain groups for allegedly financing themselves through the drug trade.

In early March, in an interview with the Mexican daily Reforma, Pastrana said the so-called peace initiatives in Colombia were now on a totally new footing. Why? Because Colombian rebels are discredited at home and abroad, he said.

"I believe that any new start to talks in Colombia will set off from a totally different perspective—because politically the FARC are defeated, and this generates a new space to be able to consolidate a peace process," Pastrana told Reforma.

The right to fight

From the centuries-long history of the struggle between oppressed peoples and their oppressors, rich lessons can be drawn about peace processes. Peoples that have endured occupations, genocide, massacres, economic exploitation and domination have had to carry out every form of struggle.

None yearn more for peace than those who bear the brunt of imperialist and colonial aggression. For example, the sisters and brothers who carry out heroic actions with their bodies alone in Palestine today surely hunger for peace. But decades of struggle that have taken many tactical forms have shown that real peace can only be won if it is accompanied with real justice.

Vieques, Puerto Rico, is another example. Although the U.S. Navy continues to use this beautiful island for military practices, the people of Vieques have not been deterred from carrying out civil disobedience actions.

In Colombia, the movement for progressive social change has gone through some staggering experiences that influence the forms of struggle used today.

Most strikingly, in the 1980s, the armed movement declared a ceasefire to participate in the electoral arena through the Patriotic Union. A bloodbath against the people's movement ensued over the next decade.

More than 4,000 activists were killed. Mayors, presidential and other candidates were openly assassinated. There was no U.S. government condemnation of the terror. On the contrary, the bloodbath helped strengthen the hand of U.S. imperialism in Colombia.

This experience weighs heavily on the movement today.

Clearly, the Colombian people want an end to violence. It has gone on for so long. It has been horrific.

But the real purveyors of violence are deeply wedded to the very conditions that give rise to these forms of struggle.

U.S. imperialism, and its puppet Colombian oligarchy, is inherently opposed to fundamental social change. It will do anything to defend its class interests. U.S. imperialism will encourage the atrocities carried out by the AUC or slap its wrists with a wink, while at the same time demonizing the left-wing movement.

It will do this because the AUC death squads serve the interests of the banks, the transnational corporations and the Pentagon, while the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN) defy the interests of imperialism.

Imperialist exploitation

Imperialist exploitation and the fact that the struggle will not reconcile itself with this exploitation are the main reasons why Colombia has become such a "hot spot" in the world today.



Teresa Gutierrez (left) traveled to Colombia in November 2000 and visited the demilitarized zone.

From 1990 to 2000, unemployment in Colombia nearly doubled. It went from 10.5 percent to over 20 percent, according to official figures. In reality, it is much higher.

Who are the culprits for this unemployment? Not the FARC or the ELN, that's for sure.

An April 4 Baltimore Sun report revealed how the real culprits are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Their Draconian economic measures have devastated the Colombian economy.

The article cited a report by the Medellin-based Global Policy Network (ENS). This agency documents how the demands of so-called globalization ushered in a series of economic reforms that began in 1990, resulting in increasingly dire conditions for Colombian workers.

The Colombian government began to privatize industries and public services after accepting an infamous IMF structural adjustment loan. Not only did unemployment rise, but Colombia became more dependent, more dominated by multinational corporations.

Opening the nation's economy to so-called world competition meant that Colombia would now import more than it exported. The once healthy agricultural sector was devastated.

The Baltimore Sun reported, "Colombia now imports more than 6 million tons of food annually while 2 million acres of arable land lie idle."

It continued, "Between 1997 and 2000, the percentage of Colombians living in poverty rose from 50.3 percent to 60 percent."

ENS analyst Jose Luciano Sanin pointed out, "When people have a choice of seeing their family starve or breaking the law, laws against drug cultivation mean nothing and some people will take up arms."

History shows that as long as dire conditions exist for the masses of workers and peasants, they will take up all forms of struggle. The real terrorist in the world—U.S. imperialism—leaves us no option.

Whether in Colombia, Palestine or elsewhere, the task of the anti-war and solidarity movement in the United States is to support the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors. It is to demand that U.S. imperialism get the hell out, around the world. Then real peace will be ushered in everywhere.

workers world editorial

Demonization and war

The Israeli army carries out a massacre in Palestinian towns and refugee camps with U.S. weapons. NBC television announces that the U.S. Army plans to invade Iraq with 250,000 troops in November or December when the weather is cooler and clearer—as long as things are settled in Afghanistan and Palestine. Bush keeps threatening endless war—against north Korea, Colombia, Somalia, and always Iraq.

When talk of war is in the air, when Washington threatens people all over the world, it's time for a united anti-war movement. And for this fight to be successful, there is little more important than understanding the propaganda machine that serves the imperialist establishment of billionaire bankers, Pentagon generals, oil magnates and arms manufacturers who gain from war.

One of their greatest tools has been their success in what has come to be called "demonization" of the so-called enemy leader. By extension, an entire people is vilified and slandered.

It doesn't matter that Yassir Arafat is a recognized leader of his people. Ariel Sharon, the butcher of Sabra and Shatila, and now of Jenin, condemns him as a "terrorist." In only a slightly milder form, the U.S. media support this demonization of Arafat and all Palestinians—and the U.S.-armed slaughter continues.

It doesn't matter that Washington first welcomed Saddam Hussein's rise to power in 1979. Or that it prodded Baghdad to go to war with the Iranians after that country's 1979 revolution. When the United States wanted bases on the Persian/Arabian Gulf and control of the region's oil, it called Saddam Hussein a "new Hitler." The Pentagon unleashed a brutal bombing campaign and then murderous sanctions that killed 1.5 million Iraqis. They plan a sequel for this fall or winter.

It doesn't matter that Washington negotiated a settlement to the Bosnian civil war with Slobodan Milosevic in 1995. Three years later the U.S. administration and media machine called the Yugoslav leader yet another "Hitler." As with Saddam Hussein and the Iraqis, that slander was aimed at making targets of the Yugoslav people for a 78-day bombing campaign. And now there are U.S. and NATO bases all over the Balkans—in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Among the people of the world, there may be diverse evaluations of these national leaders. But when imperialist propaganda heaps attack upon attack on them, vilifies them, paints them up as "Hitlers," there is only one aim in mind: to prepare the home population to support a war against the people of the countries these leaders head.

If Milosevic is on trial in The Hague, it's to justify NATO aggression against Yugoslavia. If Arafat is called a leader of terror, it's to justify destroying his offices and slaughtering Palestinians. If the possessor of tens of thousands of nuclear warheads charges Saddam Hussein with holding "weapons of mass destruction," it's to prepare to destroy Iraq.

Over the years, Washington has propped up Somoza in Nicaragua, the shah in Iran, Papa Doc Duvalier in Haiti, Batista in Cuba, Pinochet in Chile, the racist apartheid regime in South Africa and Joseph Mobutu in Zaire. The list of these dictators is very long. But as long as they served to extend control over the world's resources, markets and labor power by a handful of giant corporations and their biggest owners, there was no demonization for them.

So if Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, or Muammar Qaddhafi of Libya, or Kim Jong Il of north Korea, or–in the latest case–Hugo Chavez of Venezuela comes under propaganda fire from Washington's politicians and the U.S. moneyed media, watch out for CIA subversion or Pentagon invasion or both. And get ready to fight to stop the latest war drive against Iraq.

General strike shuts down Italy

By John Catalinotto

On April 16, the Italian working class showed its central role in society. To defend their rights to their jobs, 13 million workers shut down large- and medium-sized factories, public services, newspapers and other media and schools, and slowed transport throughout Italy for eight hours.

More than two million workers and supporters from the student and anti-globalization movement and left political parties marched in the streets and filled the plazas throughout the country. The turnouts included: 400,000 in Florence, 200,000 in Rome, 300,000 in Milan, 200,000 in Bologna and 150,000 in Turin, according to organizers.

It was the first one-day general strike in Italy since 1982.

After years of government and bosses chipping away at workers' rights, an attack by the openly right-wing regime headed by billionaire media magnate and now Premier Silvio Berlusconi forced this strong defensive union action.

Berlusconi threatened to dismantle Article 18 of the labor law. Article 18, won through mass struggle, defends workers' rights to keep their jobs.

Some 80-90 percent of organized workers joined the strike, with higher response especially in the northern industrial regions around Milan and Florence.

Workers World spoke with Florence-based English teacher and union activist John Gilbert, who had spent the morning putting up posters to "seal" the doors of all university buildings to declare them closed for the strike.

Florence submerged in red flags

"There was incredible adherence to the strike by workers," said Gilbert. "In Florence there were four marches leading to four different squares with all of Tuscany participating. One march was by the autonomous 'far-left' grass-roots unions that apparently saw 10,000 participating. The other three were organized by CGIL-CISL-UIL."

The historically left-wing CGIL, the CISL and UIL union confederations together represent 11 million workers. All the autonomous and grass-roots union groupings also joined for a united action.

In Florence, "the unions were expecting 200,000 and apparently 400,000 showed up," said Gilbert. "It was incredible."

There was also a broader political aspect of the protests. "Rifondazione Comunista [the most left wing of the parliamentary parties] was very visible as were Palestinian and also Cuban flags," Gilbert added. "A Rom [Gypsy] delegation marched in front of our very large university delegation. Florence was completely inundated with every street, square and alleyway submerged in red flags."

"People were jubilant but the question on everyone's mind is: what next? The government seems to have no intention of backing off its anti-worker, anti-immigrant legislative program. How can the unions stop them?" Gilbert asked.



Florence, April 16.

Many observers recalled the 1980s in the U.S. and Britain. The right-wing Reagan administration in the U.S. broke the Air Traffic Controllers' strike. The Thatcher government in Britain broke a miners' strike. These were part of a general capitalist offensive that weakened unionized labor in both countries and led to a steady erosion of workers' rights.

The Italian bankers and bosses have been trying to do the same. Starting in the mid-1990s, a center-left government sliced away at the workers' social benefits. Now the more frontal attack by rightist Berlusconi has aroused a strong response.

Another participant in the strike action, Moreno Pasquinelli, a leader of the Anti-Imperialist Camp in Italy, remarked to Workers World that there is a difference between the 1980s in Britain and the situation for the Italian workers today. "The British miners were isolated, but in Italy the entire unionized work force will resist. If the union leadership and Berlusconi are unable to reach a rotten compromise, it will open a new era of social conflict. But it will be a difficult struggle."

U.S. protests

Continued from page 10

state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Assembling at the Henry Reuss Federal Building in the heart of the shopping and financial district during evening rush hour, the protesters circled the building chanting, "Free Palestine," "End the occupation," and "Israel must go!" Speakers vowed that Palestinians will not stop fighting until freedom is won. The A Job is a Right Campaign, Alverno College students, the Muslim Student Association at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and various Arab-American and Muslim organizations sponsored or endorsed the rally.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE: On April 9 the Muslim Student Association at UW-Milwaukee held a rally of about 150 during lunch hour with the same demands. They rallied in front of the school's Golda Meir Library, named after Israel's former prime minister. Future actions are in the planning stages.

BUFFALO, N.Y.: More than 250 Arab and Palestinian protesters and supporters marched for three hours outside City Hall on April 12. Speakers said the U.S.-supported Israeli occupation of Palestine has to end before there can be peace. Signs reading "No justice? No peace!" reflected that sentiment. Mothers with strollers marched. Young children wore T-shirts emblazoned with a graphic of Palestinian children with stones facing down U.S.-supplied Israeli tanks.

Many who attended have relatives in the besieged occupied territories. Rasmieh Musleh carried a picture of her cousin, killed in the West Bank last month. "He worked on an ambulance and was shot in the head by the Israeli army while he was trying to help injured people." Participants included members of the International Action Center, the International ANSWER coalition, Buffalo Forum, Green Party and the New York State Civil Liberties Union. Local activists are organizing to bring buses to the April 20 protest in Washington.

LANSING, MICH.: Several hundred people rallied at the Michigan State Capitol for Palestine. The Muslim Student Association of Michigan State University called the action. The varied ages, multi-national and multi-religious character of the crowd showed the broadening support for the Palestinian struggle. Speakers included Jewish anti-Zionists and a poet from a local church.

Other pro-Palestinian protests took place at the **University of Michigan**, **Ohio State University**, **Columbia University** and the **University of Minnesota**.

Reporting by Martha Grevatt, Cheryl LaBash, Bill Massey, Beth Semmer, Bryan Pfeiffer and Bev Hiestand.

Palestinian freedom cry can't be silenced

Continued from page 1

were confined 26 men to each tent under the most brutal conditions. Temperatures rise to 120 degrees Fahrenheit in the day and fall below freezing at night in the area, and the prison there has been condemned worldwide for grossly violating human rights.

April 16—The Israeli government of war criminal Ariel Sharon is still refusing to allow the Red Cross/Red Crescent and the media into the destroyed Jenin refugee camp. Sharon's motivation is obvious: to limit access to the site so the Israeli Army and intelligence services can "clean up" the massacre and appalling destruction they inflicted on the camp.

The Jenin camp, situated on less than one square mile, was home to 13,000 people. It was reduced to piles of rubble by Israeli bulldozers, tanks, missiles and shelling. An unknown number of people were buried alive in their crushed homes.

Remarkably, the residents of Jenin camp held out for more than a week in the face of overwhelming firepower. Close to 100 Israeli soldiers were killed or wounded.

The attack on Jenin was part of a huge Israeli offensive in the West Bank, involving at least 100,000 troops and hundreds of tanks and attack helicopters. Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus, Hebron, Qalqiliya, Tulkarem—all the biggest cities and adjoining refugee camps were targeted.

The invaders deliberately destroyed water, power, sewage and other infrastructure systems. Food supplies were stolen and countless homes wrecked and looted by Israeli soldiers. A 24-hour curfew was imposed in all the cities and camps under attack and kept in place for up to a week. People who ventured outside their homes, or even looked out their windows, were subject to being shot without warning.

The offensive began in Ramallah on March 29, the day after the Arab League voted unanimously for a plan to start "peace" negotiations. Sharon used a suicide bombing in Israel as the pretext for the massive assault, but clearly this offensive was long in the making.

The first focus of the attack on Ramallah was the government compound where the Palestinian Authority is headquartered. Seven buildings were completely destroyed, leaving PA President Yasser Arafat and some of his aides trapped in two rooms, with no running water or electricity.

Sharon "offered" to allow the Palestinian leader out of his imprisonment only if he agreed to go into exile outside Palestine. Arafat flatly refused, expressing his confidence that the Palestinian people would emerge victorious.

As the images of Palestinian suffering and resistance flashed across TV screens, mass demonstrations erupted in the Arab world and beyond. In Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain and other states whose governments have long been subservient to the United States, protesters fought battles in the streets with the police, demanding a breaking of ties and denouncing both the U.S. and Israel. The Arab masses viewed the attack on the Palestinians as a combined U.S.-Israeli war.

The protests turned into the largest demonstrations in the region in many years, and held out the prospect of destabilizing the pro-U.S. regimes.

Massive anti-U.S. anger in the region is a major obstacle to the U.S. launching of a new war on Iraq, a top priority of the Washington war makers. On April 5, Bush told the British ITV news, "I made up my mind, Saddam must go."

The incredible imperial arrogance of Bush's statement aside, it shows that the decision has been definitively made inside the administration to attempt the recolonization of Iraq by military means.

Re-conquering Iraq, taking control of its vast oil fields and securing U.S. control of the entire Gulf region—home to two-thirds of the world's oil reserves—is a top priority of imperialist foreign policy.

But to launch the kind of large-scale war required to achieve this objective is greatly complicated by the popular anger sweeping the Middle East. To initiate such a war without first mitigating the struggle in Palestine could lead to more massive and, from the point of view of Washington and its puppet regimes, dangerous rebellions.

In attempting to extend its domination under these conditions, the U.S. could very well trigger a social explosion that could undermine its hegemony in the area.

It is this concern that motivated the sending of Secretary of State Colin Powell to the region.

The Bush-Powell peace charade

On April 4, six days after the start of the Israeli offensive, President Bush announced that Powell was being sent to the Middle East to seek a ceasefire and resumption of negotiations. In his speech, Bush called on the besieged Palestinian president to "stop inciting violence."

He also called for Israel to pull back from West Bank cities, but made it clear that he didn't expect that to happen very quickly. The president said that Powell wouldn't arrive in the area until April 11, in effect giving the Israelis another week to continue their mission of death and destruction.

The day after Bush's speech, Israel expanded its assault to more cities and camps. When asked about this on April 5, Bush disingenuously replied that he understood that "things don't happen overnight in the Middle East."

So, the question might be asked, why bother with even the charade of sending Powell to the region?

Powell's trip is not really seeking any genuine peace agreement, but rather the liquidation of the Palestinian struggle. Powell is pressuring the besieged PA leadership to call for an end to the struggle as the prelude to simply restarting negotiations.

Anyone who has any experience in the labor movement knows how foolish and irresponsible it would be for a union leader to advise striking workers to dismantle their picket lines before sitting down at the bargaining table. But this is exactly what Powell is demanding of the Palestinians.

Powell's approach is designed to destroy the Palestinian movement by splitting it and throwing it into disarray through negotiations, while maintaining heavy repression.

Others in the administration have a different view. Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and other leading national security officials share, of course, Powell's goal of liquidating the Palestinian struggle. But their approach is different: Forget the negotiations; just crush the Palestinian people through brutal and unrestrained force.

Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and others see the Palestinians as a whole as a force that must be destroyed as part of subjecting the region as a whole. And it is this view that is holding sway in the Bush administration today.

The Palestinian Revolution is, as it has always been, a just national liberation struggle against colonialism and for the right to self-determination. It is also today the key struggle against the global U.S. war strategy.

For both reasons, the anti-war and progressive movement in this country and all over the world must give its full support to the Palestinian people in this critical hour.

Despite the massive attack on their cities and people, the Palestinian resistance remains defiant and determined, as expressed in a statement written by two leading activists in Bethlehem/Beit Sahour.

Dr. Majed Nasser, a leader of the Health Work Committees, and Nassar Ibrahim of the Alternative Information Center, wrote, in part, on April 14:

"Although our backs have been pushed against the wall, our chests continue to face the tanks, and our hearts are with all of those who are resisting the occupation. And our eyes, the eyes of every single Palestinian—man or woman, old or young, disabled or sick — are firmly fixed on the goal of freedom and independence, and finally peace. There is no going back. We have never been as close to our freedom and independence as we are these days. . . .

"Surrender to Israeli occupation means death. Resistance to the Israeli occupation means life and dignity even in the face of death. The Palestinian people are saying a clear NO to the Israeli occupation and a clear NO to surrender. Sharon will never gain the submission of the Palestinian people. ... We are not alone. We recognize our friends in the millions who are protesting the Israeli occupation.

"To the Israeli people we say: The more your government suppresses the Palestinian people, the more we will resist you. Do not try to hide behind your ignorance and try to negate our existence. Listen to what the rest of the world is telling you. Sharon and Peres are leading you and the entire region to catastrophe. ... Your government is actually risking your security because of its colonialist expansionist appetite. Stand up and join the progressive Israeli movements that demand an end to the occupation, which is the cause for your insecurity and for all the bloodshed. Sharon has only wrought more destruction and insecurity on your community and on ours.

"Sharon wanted to isolate Arafat. Instead he isolated himself and you.

"We are here in our villages, refugee camps, and cities among our families and friends. Our cry for freedom cannot be silenced."

Worldwide protests

Continued from page 11

Committee for Palestine. At the end of the march, some youths started throwing stones and bottles at police and nine were arrested.

Portugal saw a major demonstration in **Lisbon** April 10. Some 7,000 people came to Lisbon's Camoes Square at 6:30 PM and marched through the city chanting slogans like "Bush, Sharon: murderers," "Palestine will win," and "Sharon: you are the terrorist." A smaller demonstration took place in **Madrid** April 10 to mark Powell's visit.

France, which has the biggest Jewish community in Europe as well as the highest proportion of Muslims, saw a number of pro-Palestinian protests outside **Paris** the weekend of April 13. The major demonstration in Paris was on domestic issues, since the first round of the French presidential election is April 21.

There have also been protests in **Poland**, **Hungary**, **Ireland**, **Scotland** and **Sweden**.

Arrestos de inmigrantes inician protestas

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parte occidental del país. Bajo la "Operación Tarmac" el SIN es actualmente revisando el historial de empleo de los empleados de aeropuerto en LAX. Esta operación ha resultado en arrestos en Boston, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Las Vegas y en otras partes.

Este bramante asalto contra los derechos de los inmigrantes ha sido ampliado aún más con una orden de la corte suprema el 21 de marzo concerniente a los derechos de los trabajadores indocumentado de demandar si ellos son en resumidas cuentas despedidos por razones injustas. En el caso Hoffman Plastic Compounds vs. NLRB, José Castro y tres de sus compañeros de trabajo fueron despedidos por distribuir tarjetas de sindicatos a los compañeros de trabajo en su planta. En una decisión de 5-4, la Corte Suprema dictaminó de que los inmigrantes ilegales quienes fueron erradamente despedidos por organizar para los sindicatos no tienen derecho a sus salarios.

Los activistas pro derecho del inmigrante y líderes sindicales inmediatamente condenaron la decisión y dijeron que esta decisión menoscaba el derecho de los trabajadores más vulnerables. "Esta decisión permitirá a los empresarios hacer víctimas a los obreros indocumentados y librarse de las consecuencias," declaró Jonathan Hiat, un abogado de la organización laboral nacional AFL-CIO. Como siempre los trabajadores sufren las ramificaciones legales simplemente por trabajar en empleos de poca paga mientras que los patrones capitalistas explotan a la fuerza laboral y son libre de todo escrutinio legal.

Esta serie de ataques agresivos contra gente honrada y trabajadora expone la política hipócrita y confabulante de la administración de Bush. Ni un año siquiera George W. Bush estaba cortejando al presidente de México, Vicente Fox y a la comunidad mexicana-americana en los Estados Unidos con declaraciones de amistad. Fox y otros se creyeron las promesas falsas de Bush de llegar a un acuerdo favorable respecto a una gran cifra de trabajadores indocumentados de origen mexicano en este país. Los ataques del 11 de septiembre en Nueva York y Washington D.C. dio a la administración de Bush la excusa que buscaba para distanciarse de cualquier otra negociación con respecto a la legalización de los trabajadores indocumentados en los Estados Unidos.

Las políticas reaccionarias de la administración de Bush no pasarán sin contestación. Las protestas de los obreros en el Aeropuerto Internacional de Los Angeles es solo un paso hacia delante en la lucha por los derechos de los obreros indocumentados.

¡PROLETARIOS Y OPRIMIDOS DE TODOS LOS PAÍSES, UNÍOS!

MUNDO OBRERO

Llevando la guerra a los sindicatos

Por Deirdre Griswold



Madrid

Uno de los problemas más difíciles para los progresistas en el movimiento sindical es como discutir la cuestión de la guerra imperialista. La presión sobre los líderes de los sindicatos de apoyar a cualquiera aventura militar es fuerte y viene del gobierno al igual que de los patrones. Aún más difícil ha sido la cuestión del apoyo de los Estados Unidos por el estado racista colonizador de Israel ha ido más allá de la crítica en la mayoría del movimiento laboral.

En el momento actual, mientras que protestas están irrumpiendo a través de este país y el mundo en contra de la represión bárbara del pueblo palestino por los militares israelíes armado y patrocinado por los Estados Unidos, ha comenzado por lo menos un inicio de un debate sobre este tema dentro de los sindicatos. La clase trabajadora de los Estados Unidos de hoy tiene una proporción sustancial de trabajadores de nacionalidades oprimidas. Muchos de ellos han huido regímenes represivos apoyados por los Estados Unidos en sus países nativos. Parece que la compasión y la solidaridad con la gente palestina oprimida y exiliada es muy natural por ellos.

En la costa oeste de los EE.UU., donde el movimiento sindical ha sido tradicionalmente más militante y progresivo que en la mayoría de otras partes del país, varios sindicatos votaron a favor de resoluciones en el período reciente en contra de la beligerancia de la administración de Bush y en apoyo a las manifestaciones nacionales en contra de la guerra que se van a llevar a cabo el 20 abril en Washington, D.C. y en San Francisco de California. Sin embargo, el 8 de abril el Consejo Central Sindical de San Francisco votó para rescindir una resolución que había endosado llamando por un fin a la violencia en Israel y Palestina Ocupada. La moción para rescindir fue adoptada por un escaso margen de un 67% de los votos.

Los sindicalistas más progresistas juraron seguir con la lucha.

En Nueva York el 9 de abril, una resolución importante fue adoptada por casi 200 delegados del sindicato de trabajadores de la salud. Contuvo cuatro demandas: que Israel termine la ocupación de Cisjordania y en la Franja de Gaza de inmediato; un alto a la ayuda militar de los Estados Unidos para Israel; que apoyen al derecho de los refugiados palestinos volver a sus casas; y que endosen a las protestas como las del 20 de abril y otras que apoyen a estas demandas.

Un delegado judío presentó la resolución en la reunión del consejo de delegados del sindicato local 1199 de Sistemas de Salud I-V. Anteriormente, había repartido un volante con el título: Matan a los palestinos... nuestros impuestos pagan la cuenta". La resolución fue adoptada con un solo voto de oposición. Este consejo de delegados representa a más de la mitad de los trabajadores de la salud sindicalizados en los hospitales de Nueva York.

Mientras que crece el momento en este país en contra de la agresión estadounidense en el Medio Oriente, progresistas en los sindicatos pensarán bastante en la búsqueda de la forma más efectiva para alcanzar a sus hermanas y hermanos sindicalizados con la información y el espíritu de lucha que van a necesitar para romper con las posiciones políticas establecidas por el enemigo de clase y su establecimiento político.

Primero, los viajeros, ahora los trabajadores de aeropuerto

Arrestos de inmigrantes inician protestas

Por Adrián García
Los Angeles, California

"¿Qué queremos? ¡Justicia!" era el coro que resonaba de los cientos de manifestantes que marchaban en el Aeropuerto Internacional de Los Angeles el 28 de marzo, en medio de las miradas de los viajeros desconcertados. El rumbo de la marcha fue la terminal uno de LAX, la cual ha sido en escenario de recientes incursiones del SIN (Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización) contra los indocumentados, en su mayoría de inmigrantes mexicanos.

Los manifestantes son partes de sindicatos locales, grupos religiosos y de grupos pro derecho del inmigrante. La marcha también incluía a una gran cifra de trabajadores inmigrantes. La demanda era la de dan fin a la política vitriólica del gobierno estadounidense de detener y arrestar a los inmigrantes en los aeropuertos.

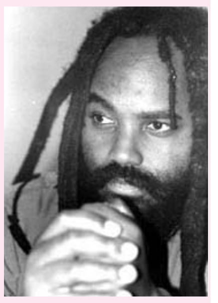
En las primeras dos semanas de la nueva política, desde el 18 de marzo hasta el 27 de marzo, 184 inmigrantes sospechados de ser indocumentados fueron arrestados antes de abordar los vuelos destinados a varias ciudades del país, según reportó el periódico Los Angeles Times el 27 de marzo. Imágenes de las barridas al estilo fascista fueron mostradas en la televisión de lengua española, generando gran indignación dentro de las comunidades mexicana y latinoamericanas. "Yo no he hecho nada más que trabajar duro desde que llegué aquí. Las redadas su injustas. La migra nos hostiga solo por ser mexicanos," comentó Alfredo, uno de los manifestantes.

Las autoridades federales admitieron que las redadas contra los inmigrantes se han comprobado ser no exitosas en restringir las cadenas de contrabando las cuales ellos profesan estar luchando. Sin embargo los oficiales del SIN han hecho claro de que las redadas continuarán. Los ataques contra los inmigrantes en los aeropuertos por el gobierno federal ha expandido sus objetivo y ha ido más allá de hostigar a los pasajero y hasta llegar a los empleados. Unos 200 trabajadores de aeropuerto han sido arrestados en toda la

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MENSAJE DE MUMIA PARA EL 20 DE ABRIL

Guerra para el Imperio Eterno



Cuando el presidente George W. Bush habló sobre una guerra sin fin, algunos lo tomaron como un simple discurso político o retórica, con el objetivo de ganar un lugar privilegiado en un noticiero nocturno. Yo no. "W" es un agente de su clase, los mercaderes ricos del petróleo en la tierra. Y sus intenciones son de empujar la guerra a todos los confines del mundo, y hacer el mundo mas seguro para la explotación del capital y el comercio ilimitado.

Esto eventualmente se convertirá en una guerra que llegará a todos los países del Medio Oriente y aún más allá para beneficio de las castas ricas y poderosas que gobiernan. No te equivoques. Esta es una guerra que no tiene nada que ver con la democracia. Los Estados Unidos entran a la región, armados hasta los dientes, no para defender las democracias—sino para defender las teocracias. Para defender reyes, príncipes y sultanes. Para defender los recursos de petróleo de los Estados Unidos en la región.

¿Y como es posible que los Estados Unidos diga que están dirigiendo una guerra en contra del terrorismo cuando la academia mas grande del mundo donde se entrenan terroristas, es la Escuela de las Américas en Georgia, donde se han graduado algunos de los dictadores más brutales del mundo?

Los Estados Unidos le ha cambiado el nombre a la escuela pero la misión esencial es la misma — crear líderes militares extranjeros, que son enemigos de la democracia y de los movimientos populares. Ellos han dado prueba a sus maestros imperiales en Washington. Los graduados de la Escuela de las Américas han dado prueba de ser luchadores inflexibles; maestros de las artes obscuras de la tortura, de los interrogatorios crueles, las violaciones y los asesinatos masivos. Y pelean en contra de su propio pueblo.

Para millones de personas en América Latina, la escuela es conocida con el nombre de "La Escuela de Golpes"—la escuela de los golpes de estado.

Hay ejemplos de masacres infames que pueden ser adjudicadas a estos graduados. La masacre de Uraba en Colombia. La masacre de El Mozote, la violación y el asesinato de cuatro religiosas norteamericanas y la masacre de los Jesuitas en El Salvador, la masacre de La Cantura en Perú, y cientos mas. Cuando los Estados Unidos hablan sobre una guerra en contra del terrorismo, hay millones en América del Sur que se ríen de semejante ridiculez ya que ellos conocen de otra América, la que produce el terrorismo de estado.

Los que te trajeron 911 fueron traídos para ti por la CIA. Ellos se graduaron en la escuela de terrorismo de la CIA, diseñada para derrotar a los soldados de la ex Unión Soviética. Eran guerreros pagados, adoctrinados y armados por los Estados Unidos, Pakistán, Arabia Saudita y agencias de inteligencia para librar una guerra santa en contra del gobierno comunista en Afganistán. Y como dice el proverbio de guerra, le dieron vuelta a los que los alimentaron y entrenaron para recordarles lo que habían creado.

Y con escasa consideración desde el comienzo, sobre las consecuencias, la nación una vez mas, esta embarcada en una guerra. Una guerra que no nació en el oriente tropical; esta guerra comenzó en oficinas frías de edificios de Washington, donde hombres de riqueza y poder crearon planes para atraer a la ex Unión Soviética a territorio vecino, en lo que ellos llamaron "La trampa Afgana" Y ahora, como dijera Malcolm X "las gallinas han vuelto a casa a empollar."

¿Quieres detener la guerra? Deténla donde nació. En Washington D.C.

Desde los corredores de la muerte,
este es Mumia Abu-Jamal